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INDIA

JULY 15, 1990

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LTTE chief Velupillai Pirabhakaran

**SRI LANKA** 

A series of blunders drags the LTTE into another disastrous war and puts pressure on the Indian Government's hands-off policy.

ON THE SPOT REPORT

### MADE IN INDIA

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The challenge we face and must resolve to establish is our pride in the stamp: Made in India. This can only happen when we compete internationally on dimensions of cost and quality.

J.N. Sapru, Chairman, I.T.C. Limited Address to Shareholders, June 1989

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#### Back to the Battlefield

Every hope of peace returning to Sri Lanka has been shattered with the outbreak of fresh hostilities between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan Government. All out war has been declared, and things are rapidly going back to square one: the armed forces holding the towns, and the LTTE the countryside.



#### The Boom in Doom

Film makers are jumping on to the macabre bandwagon of horror films—which are inexpensive to make and have excellent initial drawing power. But as more film makers tread the path pioneered by the Ramsays, horror is losing its bite. It's getting diluted by music, sex and comedy.



#### Crisis of Credibility

As scandals involving judges rocked the Bombay High Court, shock waves were felt across the nation's judiciary. As the spotlight fell on other high courts, charges of nepotism, corruption and politicisation were being levelled, placing a question mark on the credibility of the judiciary.

SPECIAL REPORT .......36



#### The Call of Consumerism

Increasing wealth and the exhortations of television have hooked India's villagers on a whole range of consumer products. To tap that new and growing market, companies are setting up special divisions, designing products for rural areas and unleashing a host of new selling strategies.

BUSINESS FEATURE......82



#### Come-back Chaos

Billed as the one event that would put the Congress(I) on the come-back trail, Rajiv's 'Bharat Yatra' has turned out to be more symbolism than substance. People have flocked to his meetings everywhere, but the lack of a clear strategy could mean the crowds won't be translated into votes.

SPECIAL REPORT......76



#### All in the Family

The 109-member Marapanhalli Laxmayha family in Karnataka's Kolar district, is certainly among the largest joint families in the country. To cater to its size, the happy family has evolved some quaint rituals—such as communal baths. A look at their fascinating life-style.

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EYE-CATCHERS

Cover photograph by SHYAM TEKWANI

Japanese state-of-the-art.



# VIDEOCON AIR CONDITIONERS

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# Introducing Videocon Air Conditioners. Manufactured under D & D supply agreement with Matsushita Electric Company, Japan, the owners of brand name 'National'.

In technology that's state-of-the-art or in artisitc pursuits, the Japanese are born inventors, innovators.

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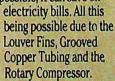
The Videocon Air Conditioner incorporates an ultra thin heat exchanger and specially designed

sirocco fan, propeller fan, fan motor and rotary compressor. What's more, the rotary compressor is mounted on a vibration-absorbing rubber base and the entire air conditioner housed in heavy insulation.

All this gives you a whisper quiet operation.

#### High-Energy Efficiency Design

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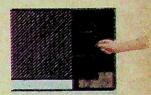
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Ashok Radisson Hotel, Bangalore

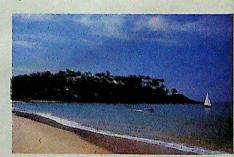
### Ashok and Radisson Together to create a new standard of world class hospitality



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N D I A'S H O S T T O T H E W O R L D



#### EYEBALL TO EYEBALL

It's possible that Pakistan is preparing for a nuclear strike against India ("Are We Prepared?", June 30). Recent media reports citing pictures taken by US spy satellites indicate that Pakistan has moved nuclear warheads to its airfields. But such warfare in our country is still treated as a remote possibility. Have our policy-makers drawn up any contingency plans?

Bareilly Cantt KARUNA SINGH

A war between India and Pakistan would totally reverse the progress that both countries have achieved so far. Common sense, rather than personal power and gain, should be the motivating force behind the diplomatic relations between the two nations. Kanpur

R.G. MEHROTRA

#### SHRILL CAMPAIGN

It is quite clear that S.S. Mann is hampering the Government's efforts to restore normalcy in Punjab with the idea of becoming the chief minister of the state ("The Malaise Deepens", June 30). But he must realise that there are far more important issues than carrying the sword to Parliament. Bilaspur

SUBRATA BOSE

#### REPREHENSIBLE ACT

The manner in which the Government tried to hush up the arrest of Srinagar-based correspondent, Yusuf Jameel ("Arrest Fiasco", June 30), by putting forward theories of mistaken dentity, kidnapping and impersonation makes the episode all the more

reprehensible. Though the army has been rightly given special powers to curb secessionism in the valley, it should use them with utmost restraint and without throwing the citizens' rights to the winds.

Meerut

SHASHANK SHEKHAR

#### FIRMLY IN THE SADDLE

The cover story ("A New Assertiveness". June 15) shows Prime Minister V.P. Singh as a man of action. Though the happenings in Kashmir and Punjab have made the first six months of his stewardship a rough ride, he seems to be dealing with the problems with considerable ease. New Delhi

J. RAMNATH

With the National Front Government's survival depending on two ideologically opposed parties—the BIP and the Left-the prime minister is under tremendous constraints. And his claim that there is no pressure on him sounds very unconvincing.

Bangalore D.B.N. MURTHY

V.P. Singh has succeeded in providing an alternative to the Congress(I) by doing a balancing act for the past six months. But his government's real achievements are quite negligible.

Ambala DINESH MOUDGIL

■ The way V.P. Singh has tackled the crises in the Janata Dal over the

#### NOT ME

An interview of mine given to Tatler magazine was picked up by INDIA TODAY (June 15). In the interview a statement was attributed to me which went something like "Pathans have been coming South and have been having affairs with Indian women".

I would like to categorically state that I have never made such a foolish remark. On my arrival in England, I spoke to Tatler magazine, who have assured me that a retraction of the statement will be published in their next issue.

London

IMRAN KHAN

past six months shows that he has a lot of patience and waits for the right moment to strike. He is also a deft negotiator who does onot resort to stabbing in the back.

Bangalore

K. CHIDANAND KUMAR

It is incorrect to describe V.P. Singh's tentativeness as a weakness. In fact, it is a source of his strength. He tries to reconcile different points of view as far as possible.

Calcutta

S. BASU

V.P. Singh does have his own mind, but lack of support within his own government has made him a master of compromise. What remains to be seen is whether he can continue to walk the tightrope.

Faridabad

B.N. KOHLI

#### STRIFE AND ANARCHY

"A Beirut in the Making", (June 15) presents a frightening picture of ethnic strife and anarchy in Karachi, It should serve as an eye-opener to the Kashmiri militants and they should give up their war for secession.

Trivandrum

A. JACOB SAHAYAM

It is unfortunate that Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who lives in a glass house herself, is daring to throw stones at India. Perhaps she should try and put her own house in order before she speaks of a 1,000-year war with India over Kashmir.

Sirigere, Karnataka

R.V. REDDY

■ The internal strife in Pakistan has blown the myth that religion can unite a nation. Baluchi and Sindhi nationalism has shaken the very foundations of the country. This should be a lesson for the Kashmiri militants.

Tamil Nadu

I. ROHINI

■ Benazir Bhutto will do well to beef up her political defences in her home province of Sind rather than blame ethnic strife there on 'Indian agents'. Kurnool P. SIVARAM PRASAD

#### HAIRY REVELATION

It was very hard to believe that human hair can fetch so much money ("Quick Growth Industry", June 15).

OLUME XV NUMBER 13; FOR THE FORTNIGHT JULY 1-15, 1990

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With long plaits going out of fashion, the hair industry is sure to blossom. KARTIK K. RAVAL Ahmedabad

Instead of exporting hair, if they are processed into amino acids such as cystine and tyrosine, the same quantity of hair that fetches Rs 5 in foreign exchange can earn Rs 20. Japan, Korea and Taiwan import hair from India, use them for making these chemicals and then compete with us in the international market.

Begumpet

M.C. GUPTA

#### NEED TO CONSERVE

Closing petrol pumps for a day every week ("The Coming Crunch", June 15) will have little impact on the consumption of petrol. The need is to make the public aware of the country's diminishing resources and to promote fuel conservation.

Ahmedabad

P.V.R. NAIR

- Rationing is the only way to reduce the consumption of petrol. This way we can cut our import of petrol and save valuable foreign exchange. C.K. BHASKARAN Bangalore
- To curb the consumption of petrol, the condition of roads should be improved along with improving fuel efficiency of vehicles.

New Delhi

RAVI KISHAN

■ Bad driving habits, an ill kept engine and improperly inflated tyres lead to the loss of fuel. The absence of an effective and reliable public transport system in most of the cities compounds the problem by making it necessary for people to travel in independent vehicles.

Secunderabad

A. SRINIVASA MURTHY

■ The gas guzzlers of the '60s and '70s should be replaced with modern fuel-efficient cars. Greater incentive should be given for the production of such cars.

New Delhi

G.V. NATARAJAN

#### A GRAVE MISTAKE

The Government has committed a grave mistake ("Paying the Price", June 15) by asking Jagmohan to resign as Jammu & Kashmir's governor. It was through his efforts that adequate control over law and order could be established in the state which had reached a point of no return.

P.K. GANJU

#### SIMMERING DISCONTEN

Even after the setting up of t Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council, not ing much has changed for the people this area ("Falling Stock", June 1 They are still facing hardships. The continues to be a shortage of eve drinking water which people buy ata exorbitant price.

Darjeeling

RAJU LAN

#### DANGEROUS POLICY

It's high time the Government an concerned health authorities took n tice of the unhygienic conditions u der which drugs are manufactured the country ("Dangerous Drugs", Jur 15). The preferential treatment being given to small-scale pharmaceutic units to help them grow is at the cost human life.

Raikot

MANORAMA MEH

■ The Government's policy on dru manufacturing has encouraged u scrupulous businessmen to enter th highly specialised area to make a qui buck at the cost of innocent lives. Bombay NITISH KUM

#### ISKCON'S CRISIS

The Indian Government shou officially condemn the judicial acti taken against iskcon in the US ("Ex tential Crisis", June 15). It is one of t leading organisations spreading dian values, culture and consciou ness abroad.

Madurai

N. SUBRAMANI

#### **FUNDS FOR FASHION**

The possible closure of NIFT ("Ou Fashion", June 15) is indeed alarmi The country's export commun should give up its apathetic attitu towards this institute. Perhaps Apparel Export Promotion Cour could salvage the situation by levy a small surcharge on all exports contribute the money thus collected run the institute.

New Delhi

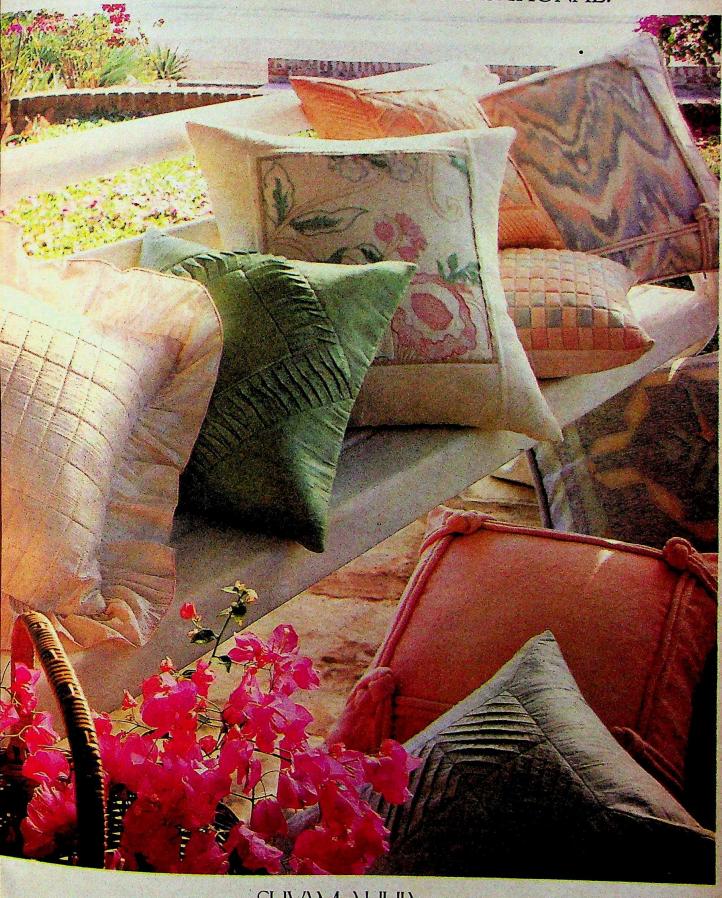
KRISHAN KAI

#### LORD OF CRICKET

Sharjah cannot be called the Me ofcricket ("A Crass Carnival", May simply because the gathering th includes a large number of celebri from the film world. It's Lord's wh alone deserves this title. Bhopal

SRINIVAS RABOMBAY

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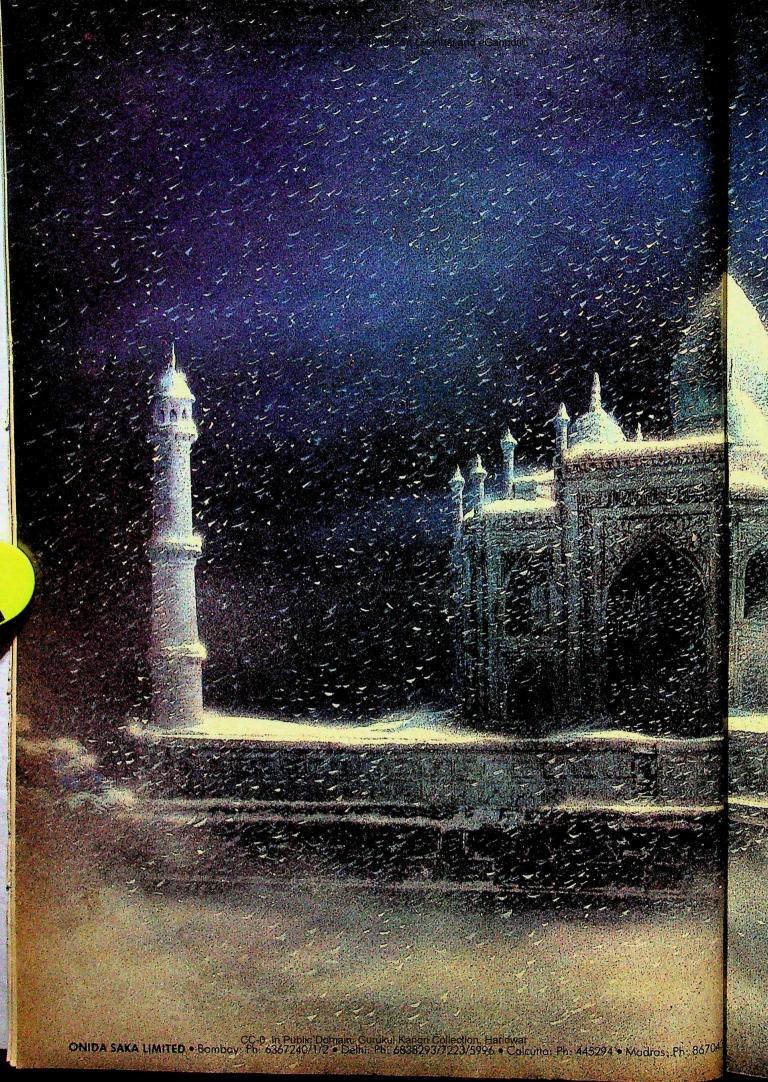
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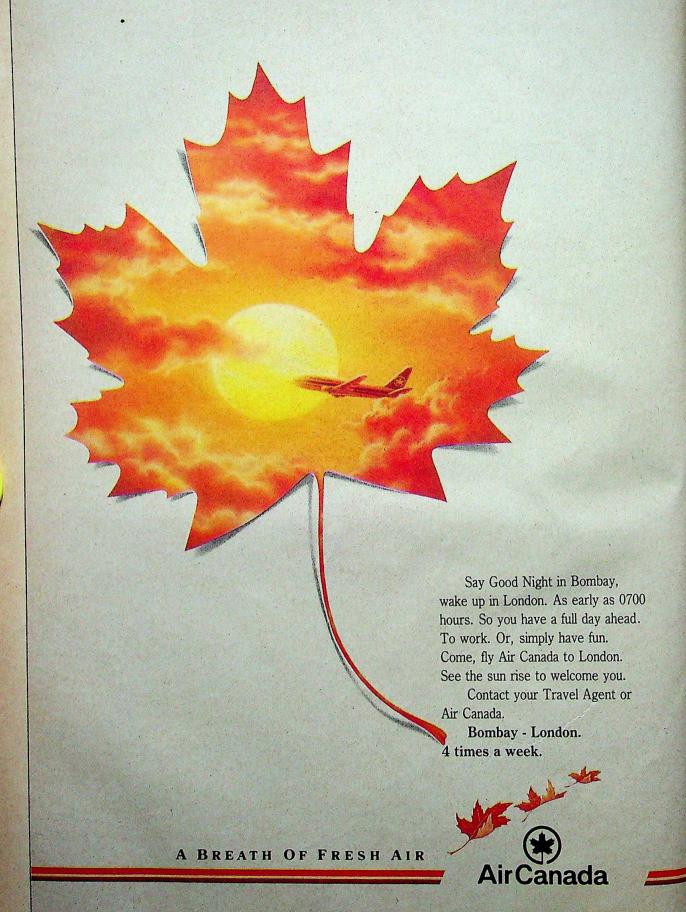
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# Stoking Separatism

HE last thing a government struggling to contain the challenge of separatism in two strategic states of the country needs is the challenge of separatism in six more strategic states. Yet, through a series of actionsmainly out of political avarice—the Government is painting itself, and the nation into that perilous corner. Worse, no one seems to be getting unduly worried about it.

Buried beneath the top-halves of the newspaper frontpages every morning, under the depressing toll of Punjab and Kashmir, lies another ominous message. The Northeast, comprising seven ethnically, politically, geographically fragile states, many of which have yet to discover their "Indian" identity, is sliding slowly but firmly into the disorder of not so long ago. That was when thousands of insurgents of various tribal and ideological hues stalked the

jungles, giving as many as 50,000 troops of the Indian Army a run for their money. The insurgencies lasted more than two decades till the Indian constitutional and democratic process, aided by determined armed action. defeated them. Today, the same democratic process that made the tribal guerillas seek a place under the Indian Constitution, could push them back into the bush.

When that happens, unortunately, the National ront—particularly anata Dal—will be primarily o blame. Despite the party's laims to political liberalism, ommitment to pluralism

and acceptance of regional parties as equal partners in the national coalition, in the North-east it has fallen in the same power trap as its predecessor, the Congress(I). With total isregard for democratic norms and conventions, and more nportantly for long-term national interest, the party has one about in single-minded pursuit of power in the small utstrategic border states, destabilising a region which was arely showing signs of coming under some kind of control.

In Meghalaya and Nagaland, the party has already istalled its governments through defection. In Mizoram nd Arunachal Pradesh campaigns are already on to edge ut the Congress(I) governments. The methods have been iken straight out of the Congress(I)'s book. In Arunachal radesh and Mizoram, where the Janata Dal did not exist at l, opposition groups have been en masse rechristened as ne Janata Dal. In Nagaland, Manipur and Meghalaya, efections have been encouraged and underwritten exactly the Congress(I) was known to do in the past.

What the party has to show for all its exertions is a ttering government in Nagaland, an uneasy coalition in eghalaya and two shaky Congress (I) governments in izoram and Arunachal Pradesh. Viewed from the angle of ational interest it all adds up to one word: instability.

What Prime Minister V.P. Singh and his advisors need to realise is that beyond fulfilling a sadistic desire to obliterate the Congress(I) even in the farthest corners of the country, there is no gain or glory in coming to power through the backdoor.

AND the cost of all this, alienation of tribal societies yet again from the national mainstream and growing cynicism about the effectiveness and fairness of Indian democracy, is unaffordable. Particularly at a time when the nation is fighting an all-out war against separatism in other parts of the country. Instability and installation of governments of defectors will only vindicate what the northeastern separatists have been saying for years. That there is no salvation for tribal minorities under the Indian Constitu-

tion, that there is no hope for fulfilment of regional democratic aspirations from the Indian polity and there is no difference between one Indian national political party and the other. There are lessons to learn from Kashmir and Punjab. One rigged election won the day for the Kashmiri separatists: why not opt for an Islamic dictatorship rather than a sham democracy? Congress(I) adventurism also gave birth to the Bhindranwale phenomenon in Punjab.

No one should harbour the illusion that the northeastern separatism is dead and buried. The rumps of

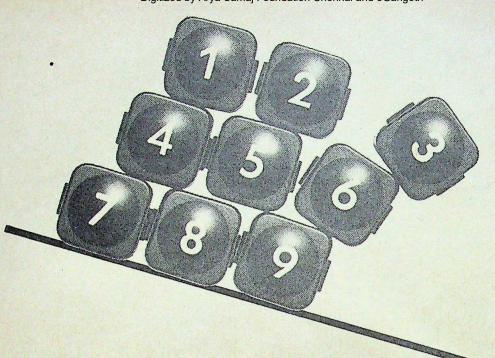
underground movements are all there. Some in the jungles of the North-east, some in adjoining Myanmar. All they were lacking so far was popular support as people, tired by decades of fighting, decided to experiment with the best India had to offer: democracy.

Now, disillusioned with "Indian democracy" they could easily return to the separatist fold. The situation now will be different from the past when it was possible for the Centre to clamp down with an iron hand, committing 13 brigades of the army and legions of paramilitary to the region. The legions are already fighting insurgents, but at the other extreme flank of the country.

Even if the Government musters sufficient cynicism to crack down it will not have the resources to do so. Which country can fight major separatist movements on both its vulnerable flanks while standing muzzle-to-muzzle with a hostile neighbour? V.P. Singh has to find time to restrain the depredations of his partymen in the North-east. He does not need the pyrrhic victory of installing his party's governments in these faraway states by stirring the hornets' nest. He needs, instead, to display political magnanimity and the ability to put national interest above parochial party interests.



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Il electronic exchanges boast of innumerable features like transfer, automatic hold, barge-in, automatic camp-on, release key, speed dialing, night mode, etc. But how many of these features are actually used? Very few. Research has proved that most of these supposedly "User-friendly" features go unutilised. The reason – Few users have the time or the inclination to memorise numerical codes for each of these features. This is also the reason why organisations now prefer the NATELCO 90's EPABX System – An electronic exchange so advanced that it is incredibly simple to use. It

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#### **Net Practice**

The younger members of the Gandhi family have always given their security personnel a pleasant diversion from their more serious duties—as badminton part-



ners. During Mrs Gandhi's time, it was quite common to find Sanjay and Maneka teaming up for a hectic game of badminton with their security guards. Now, it may just have become a requisite element in political initiation. Rajiv Gandhi's son Rahul seems to have taken up badminton with equal fervour.

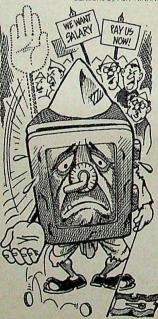
There may also be some political significance in the fact that the venue of Rahul's new sporting craze-after spearfishing and shootingis at the All India Congress(I) Committee office at 24, Akbar Road where a badminton court has been newly constructed on the sprawling lawns. And, with Rajiv no longer in power, Rahul has no dearth of partners. Every evening, he teams up with his father's security guards to enliven the proceedings at the party headquarters, conveniently situated right behind 10 Janpath, Rajiv's official residence. The name of the game, however, may not be strictly politics. Rahul is reportedly leaving St. Stephen's to join a university in the US where proficiency in sports carries its own weight.

#### Bankrupt Party

 Two years ago, the All India Congress(I) Committee launched the Congress Weekly and Congress Saptahik. The inauguration was performed by Rajiv Gandhi himself. But after the party's defeat in the last elections, priorities have obviously changed. The two party publications have been shut down since January.

No closure notice has been issued and neither have the 50-odd employees been given compensation. Instead, they have been told that the party is bankrupt. The employees are now threatening to make public the lakhs of rupees that the party has spent on other, less-rewarding activities. Unless of course what the

Cartoons by AJIT NINAM



party was referring to was political bankruptcy.

#### Airbus Ordeal

The Minister for Civil Aviation, Arif Mohammed Khan, sees himself as the most harassed man in the Government. Normally a gregarious individual who



likes to socialise, he is now finding it something of an ordeal. The reason, as he himself confides, is that everywhere he goes these days he is asked two standard questions; "How long do you think this government will last?" And; "How long will the Airbus (A-320s) remain grounded?"

Arif has a standard reply. He justifies the continued grounding of the Airbus. On the first question, however, he says he has no answer since he doesn't know himself. Considering that Arif was a key figure in the original Jan Morcha group that broke away from the Congress(I) to rally around V.P. Singh, his answer could imply that the National

Front Government could soon be in the same situation as the A-320s.

#### Socialist Slip

• The world may be changing much faster than the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) can keep up with. Last fortnight, a farewell lunch for the departing Romanian ambassador was being hosted by Additional Foreign Secretary I.P. Khosla. The invitations were duly dispatched. But the very next day, a harried-looking MEA official arrived with a fresh invitation and demanded that the original one be handed over to him. Since the dates and the venue were the same, the puzzled invitees wanted to know why he was so adamant about getting back the original invitation. The official made some lame excuse but it was only on closer scrutiny that the



real reason surfaced. The original stated that the lunch was in honour of the ambassador of the 'Socialist Republic of Romania'. Considering that it has been many months since Romania stopped calling itself the 'Socialist Republic', the gaffe was serious enough, though hopefully not a sign that Indian foreign policy is still in mothballs.

#### TAIL PIECE

(Overheard)

Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh at a lighter moment during the recent chief ministers' conference on panchayati raj and land reforms: "It is useless discussing garibi rekha or amiri rekha because the Rekha we all desire is beyond reach."

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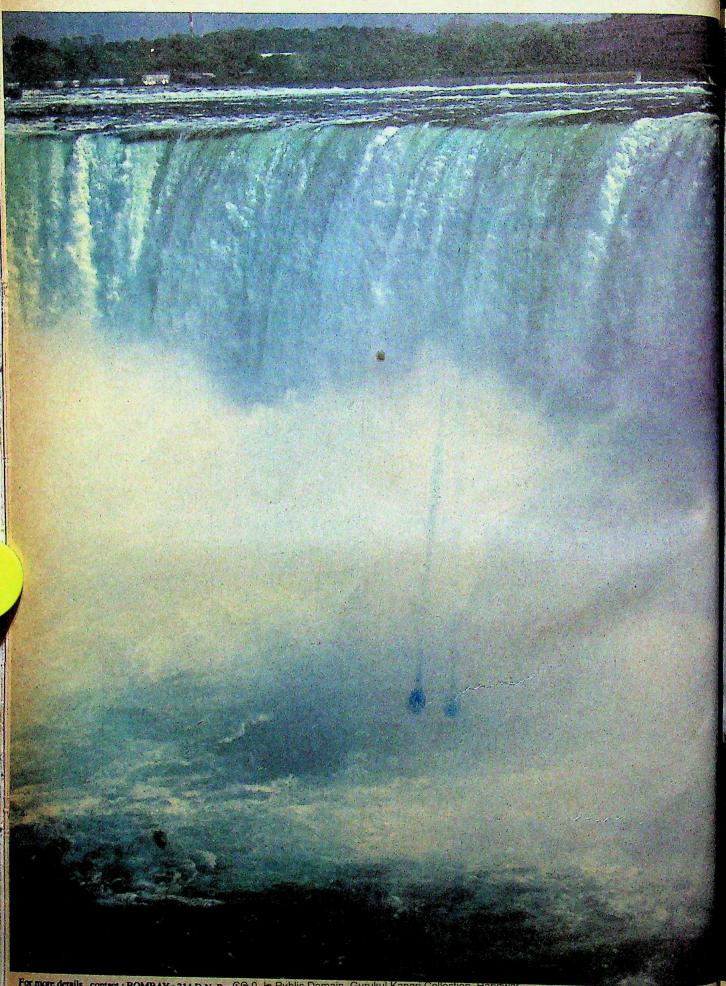
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# The courses of key European nations will soon merge to unlea we



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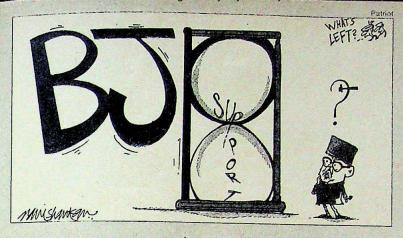
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- My position is that of a referee. A referee does not kick the ball to score a goal for anyone, but he does blow the whistle.
  - V.P. SINGH on the Janata Dal president's election, in Onlooker
- If V.P. tells me, should I go and drown myself?
   DEVI LAL on his differences with V.P. Singh, at a press conference at Dantiwada, Gujarat
- If only the ruling party can set its own house in order, this government may last its full term. L.K. ADVANI, BJP president, in Calcutta
- Militants have told me that no talks on the normalisation process in Kashmir can be held without the presence of Farooq Abdullah.
- GEORGE FERNANDES, minister for railways, at a press conference in Bombay
- Those who live by values must be ready to die for them.
  - YASHWANT SINHA, Janata Dal MP, in a letter to R.K. Hegde asking him to resign
- Ido not act on the advice of people who do not count in terms of credibility or have no political relevance.
  - R.K. HEGDE on the demand for his resignation for his alleged involvement in the telephone-tapping case, at a press conference in New Delhi
- I have never seen a more illiterate press than what exists today. Also, never a more narrow-minded, sectarian and biased press.
  - OM PRAKASH CHAUTALA, former Haryana chief minister, in Probe India
- We are creating an environment for Hindi in India.
  - MULAYAM SINGH YADAV, Uttar Pradesh chief minister, in The Telegraph
- India will open its door but outsiders should not push too hard to force that door open.
   ABID HUSSAIN, Indian ambassador to the US, to US Trade Representative Carla Hills on India's foreign investment
- Devi Lal is the Haryana political bull who carries his own China shop with him.
   K. NATWAR SINGH in Sunday
- From now on, no film with a rape scene will be passed. Violence in moderation is okay. Vulgarity is out. ✓ ■ B.P. SINGHAL. Central Board for Film Certification chairman, in The Sunday Observer
- If war broke out I would wear my tiniest mini-skirt and go as cheer-leader to the battlefront.
   POOJA BEDI in Stardust
- The quickest way to finish a star is to prematurely label him a superstar.
  - · ANIL KAPOOR in Movie

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#### FAREWELL TO ALMS

Elephants, they say. never forget. And this particular pachyderm certainly isn't going to forget what the people of Coimbatore did to him for a long time to come.

Believing that might is right, this 20-year-old tusker and his 15-year-old ma-



hout flexed their respective muscles and went on a somewhat demanding begging spree on the busy streets of Coimbatore, Confronted by a trunk hovering around their heads, few dared not to donate.

But all good things must come to an end. Soon the harassed citizens complained to the police who decided not to wield the lathi against the determined beggar. Instead they led the duo to court, confronting them with the Prohibition of Begging Act. A fine of Rs 100 was slapped on the massive client who had no lawyer to hold his brief.

Moral: those with excess weight cannot always afford to throw it around.

#### EPIC HALT

■ Come Sunday morning and the entire nation comes to a standstill, Reason; people everywhere are crowded around their television sets for nearly an hour to watch the epic Mahabharat. There seem to be no exceptions to this national schedule. not even the country's public transport.

Recently, the superfast Karnataka Express from Bangalore to Delhi-which had been running superefficiently-suddenly came to a grinding halt near Bhopal, on a Sunday morning, of course. And then, the train just refused to move for one agonising hour.

Driven up the wall, the



nervous passengers began looking for the driver. It wasn't long before they found him glued to a television at the station watching the battle of Kurukshetra unfold on the small screen.

Needless to say they were not too pleased and filed a complaint against him to restore him to the right track.

#### **ORIGIN IRE**

 Religious fundamentalists aren't the only ones up in arms against Darwin's theory of evolution. Recently, they faced some pretty stiff competition in the form of a defiant simian in Lucknow.

Only his reasons were not quite so religious. His



sense of outrage seemed to have arisen more from being described as man's cousin in a book titled Adam's Ancestor. Apparently, the little monkeywho was used to romping around houses in the area and scooping out remnants from jam and pickle bottles to make his stolen bread tastier-stumbled across a

copy of the treatise on the origin of the species when he walked into the house of a local anthropologist. Piqued at the unsavoury reference to his family, he decided to give vent to his anger, and picking up the book violently tore it to shreds.

Actually, quite a display of human pique, that.

#### MATERIAL GIRLS

■ Beware of strangers bearing treacle-dipped smiles. This is the advice that Hyderabad residents have to give any Johnnycome-lately in the city. Their reasons aren't difficult to figure out, Lately, the city has been invaded by a gang of women who stand at street corners with a helpless babe-in-the-woods look on their face.

Soon a gallant-and gullible gentleman cruises along. Screeching to a halt, he offers her a ride. Like lightning she gets in. That's when things go awry-for the gentleman, that is. The



lady threatens to 'Cry Rape' unless he parts with his money. The driver doesn't have a choice.

So, before you slam down the brakes by the side of a helpless beauty on the wayside, hoping to take her for a spin around town. think twice. She might be the one taking you for a ride.

#### PRE-NUPTIAL BITES

■ The market may be flooded with mosquito repellants, each with a shrill television campaign. But they don't seem to have reached Nasik as yet. At least if you go by the example of Vasudev Beldar-a dejected Nasik bridegroom.



For Beldar, his last encounter with mosquitoes will remain etched in mind. and heart. About to be married, he was making all the arrangements for the wedding day. But he forgot to keep a mosquito repellant in the room of his future inlaws-who after spending a whole night tossing and

turning because of the mosquito menace, moved to a nearby lodge.

Next day, the excited bridegroom reached the mandap but his bride never showed up. His now neverto-be-in-laws had, in fact, fled the town. Stung by the rejection he had no choice but to look for a new bride.

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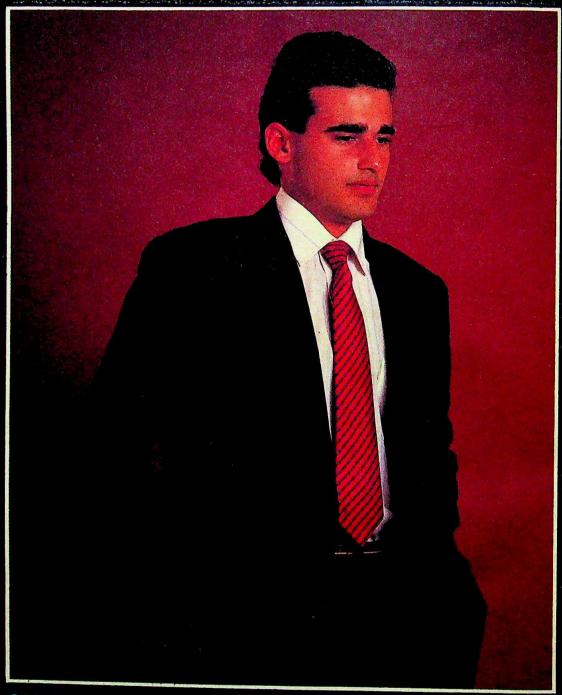
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#### SRI LANKA

# TIGERS' LAST STAND

XACTLY three years after an auda-cious Indian airdrop saved them I from impending decimation by a rampaging Sri Lankan Army, the fighters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) are back to square one.

Last fortnight, as the approximately 15,000-strong guerrilla group retreated into the jungles of north and east Sri

Lanka, pushed by a ruthless army assault it was evident that the LTTE leadership had miscalculated in taking on a determined government and a seasoned army, thirsting for more blood after wiping out the challenge of the extremist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) in the south. The total silence maintained by the Indian Government, despite criticism by former prime minister Rai Gandhi, seemed to seal the LTTE's fall ing re the Ta

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The Tigers' predicament was cor pounded by their doubly disastro sense of timing: just when the batt thickened in north-eastern Sri Lank they also struck in Madras, killing leaders of the Eelam People's Revol tionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), cat difficul

Photographs by SHYAM TEKWANI

Heavy artillery pounding has forced the LTTE to abandon even its well-fortified camps which have now

ing revulsion in India and forcing the Tamil Nadu Government to crack down on them. The Tigers' only hope now rested in the inevitable flow of refugees into Tamil Nadu making India act on their behalf.

Experts in Colombo and New Delhi—including many generals of the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) predicted that the Tigers would retreat into the jungles to fight a guerrilla war. But the Tigers' real defeat is political. Unlike the pre-1987 war of "liberation" he batt against the Sri Lankan Government and the campaign against the IPKF, the current war does not have the unequivocal support of the Tamil masses who find it LF), cau difficult to see why the LTTE brought

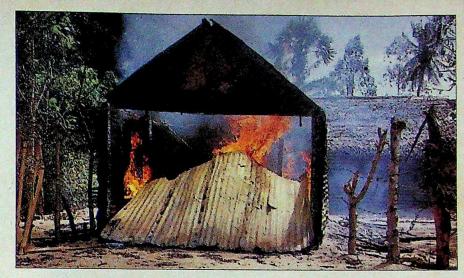
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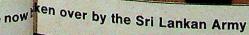
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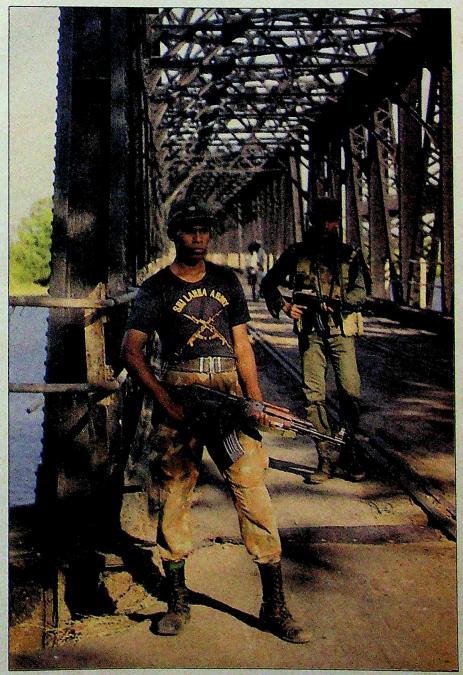
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Maintaining its lines of communications is the army's main problem

such a calamity on them just when they were emerging as the rulers of the northeast after the IPKF's departure. Worse, the killings in Madras (see box) painted the Tigers internationally as a blood-thirsty, fascist organisation.

In its first month, the battle had already taken a toll of more than three thousand lives, approximately 150 of them Sri Lankan soldiers. The Sri Lan-

kan Army controlled Trincomalee and Batticaloa though the Tigers remained active in the countryside threatening the army's lines of communication. In Jaffna peninsula, the Tamil heartland, government forces were still on the defensive. The 18th century Dutch Fort on the edge of the Jaffna lagoon which serves as an army garrison was under siege with hundreds of Tigers softening it with mortars and following up with assaults mounted on bulldozers. The puny Sri Lankan Air Force and naval gunboats were waging a

desperate battle to save the 250-strong army contingent holed up inside the fort.

Sri Lankan Army sources said they were waiting to free their troops from operations in the east and also for reinforcements to arrive from Colombo before launching a final assault. The new-look army, lightly armed in the past, now boasts some armour as well as artillery. And as Minister of State for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne said unhesitatingly (see interview), the soldiers will use their firepower unmindful of civilian casualties. "The Tigers have shot their bolt. Now the Sri Lankan Army will just flatten the north-east into rubble and advance," said a Colombo-based diplomat.

With hindsight, it is clear that the peace talks initiated by the LTTE last November were a ruse to get the IPKF out. And President Ranasinghe Premadasa, motivated by the logic that the enemy's enemy was your best friend, walked headlong into the trap. The very day the IPKF moved out, the Tigers moved in to take control. Sandbag bunkers were replaced by concrete ones. Mines were laid at sensitive points. A drive was launched to recruit boys between the ages of 10 and 15. Dry rations and ammunition were stockpiled.

The Tigers had a field day since their agreement with the Sri Lankan Government stipulated that the army and the police had to take their permission before moving out. The soldiers, under strict orders from Premadasa not to antagonise the LTTE, seethed with anger

as even 12-year-old recruits ques-SRI LANKAN ARM tioned army officers on the streets. VS LTTE ENCOUNTERS On May 13 policemen returning from a football match in eastern Sri Lanka were thrashed by LTTE cadres because they had not taken permission INCOMALEE NORTHERN PROVINCE COLOMBO EASTERN PROVINCE JAFFNA FORT UNDER Map by B.K. SHARMA

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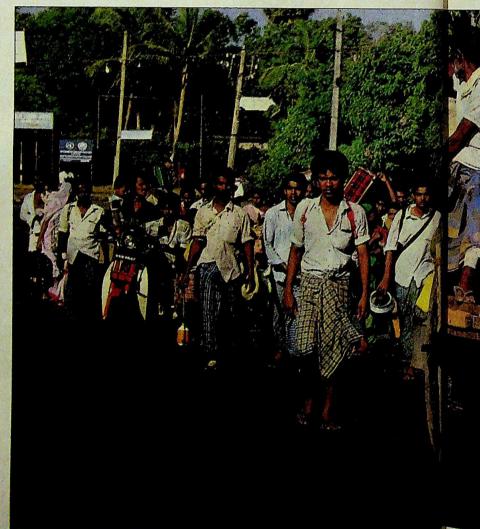
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■ Trapped in the crossfire between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan

leave the police station. Often the Tigers 'punished" the soldiers sadistically, making them kneel and crawl.

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It all came to a head on June 10. somewhat farcically. A Muslim villager, who was beaten by the Tamil husband of a woman with whom he was supposedly having an affair, went to lodge a complaint with the Batticaloa police. When the policemen refused to register the complaint LTTE cadres stormed the police station and abducted six policemen. Soon after, they captured several police stations in Batticaloa and Amparai districts and took 600 policemen captive. Emboldened by the Government's inaction they then attacked the nearby army camps in Kiran, Vellavalai and Kalawanchikuddi.

Premadasa and Wijeratne tried to bring about a cease-fire but there was no stopping the rampaging Tigers. Justice Minister A.C.S. Hameed went to Jaffna to talk to the LTTE leaders. Just before his helicopter took off from Palaly Airport on his way back, two of his bodyguards were shot at. The Tigers' basic miscalculation was that the Sri Lankan Government had lost the will to fight them-no matter what the provocation.

NSTEAD, Premadasa called the Tigers' bluff and told his army to wipe them out as it had the JVP. The army struck with the entire panoply of armaments available to it including armed US-made Bell helicopters and medium artillery. The dreaded Israeli-trained Special Task Force commandos were moved into the Eastern Province. And naval gunboats were mobilised to patrol the shallow seas to intercept LTTE cadres fleeing to India with their wounded; over 100 Tigers have been shot dead so far. Realising that they cannot fight a conventional war the Tigers have moved into the jungles. The Rs 2.4-crore they have looted from the banks while retreating is small consolation for the humiliation.

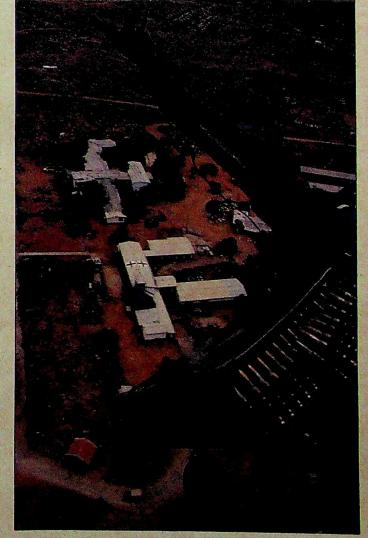
Clear patterns were emerging in the fighting. The LTTE would lay siege around army and police camps, cut off approaches, fire at helicopters to prevent them from dropping supplies, and wait for the defenders' will to break.

But that doesn't happen so easily now. One example of the army's new fighting spirit was the battle at Kiran, a camp close to Batticaloa. The camp's 50man detachment was attacked on the night of June 12 by around 300 LTTE men. The siege continued for a week and defied the army's attempts to bring in reinforcements. By June 19, however, a column broke through and massacred the LTTE. Now stench of decomposed Tigers' bodies pervades the whole area.

What demoralised the LTTE most was artillery fire. Typically, army columns moved in after a punishing artillery barrage which made the Tigers flee even well-fortified camps. The LTTE camp at Wakaneri, camouflaged with typical Tiger stripes, is now in the hands of the army who found it abandoned. Says a jubilant Lieutenant. K.C. Dharmasena: "The Tigers are on the run." And as LTTE casualties keep mounting, its Londonbased leader, Kittu, has admitted the war was wrongly timed.



my, people have now begun to flee the villages



Armed helicopters are the army's new weapon

TAMIL NADU

## **Burning the Boats**

#### The Government is forced to crackdown on LTTE

HEN the LTTE gunned down 14 EPRLF members in the crowded Zachariah Colony in Madras, it was merely carrying out its long-stated intention of eliminating all other Tamil militant groups. It proved once again how organised and meticulous the Tigers' network has become after waging a non-stop guerrilla war that has rocked the very foundation of what was once an idyllic beach-ringed tourist trap and a peaceful country.

It was from the Zachariah Colony that the EPRLF had been operating in Tamil Nadu ever since it gave up armed warfare. Most of its activists stayed in Power Apartments, a three-storey block, near the office of their Tamil Nadu representative, T. Valavan. The EPRLF secretary-general K. Padmanabha had arrived at the A-5 flat on the afternoon of June 19 from New Delhi and was closeted with senior leaders of the group, some of whom had come from the Orissa refugee camps. Between 6.45 p.m. and 7.02 p.m., LTTE activists struck in classic commando style, and drove away in their white Ambassador car casually.

Eight of their victims died in the flat itself, while six others, including a local electrician, were killed on the street or on the staircase. Twenty-two locals and a four-month-old baby suffered bullet injuries. On Padmanabha's side lay a bloody pillow, which he had held up as a pathetic shield against death.

Although the police said that the assailants had come in two white Ambassador cars, Krishna Prasad, a Gorkha watchman, says there was only one car. Four or five men began shooting even as they got out of the car. While two of them headed for the EPRLF office (see diagram) two others entered the apartment and headed up the stairs. The fifth, standing guard near the car, saw Prasad looking up from over the building's compound wall. Recalls Prasad: "He just started shooting at me. I ducked and tried to get into the toilet. When he continued to fire at me, I crawled to the back of the building. He lobbed a grenade which missed

me by a couple of feet."

The killers must have abandoned their car in Otteri near the Vandalur zoo on the Trunk road. Around 1 a.m. on June 20 a city resident was forced at gunpoint to give them his Maruti van.

RAVI SHANKARAN

other things. Says a resident of Tharangambady, a fishing hamlet of the coast: "The Tigers are daring. They have already made three trips her during the past week unmindful of the police after the Government crack down on the militants."

The Tamil Nadu Police lays no claim to being able to contain the LTM operations nor does it want to trade bullets with the guerrillas. The police pickets that dot the coastal region of Millipatnam, Pillayar Thidal, Vedaranyam, Muthupet, Athiramapatnam



#### Slain EPRLF members: swift and merciless strike

Then they must have passed through 24 police check posts on their way to Chinamunai, a coastal village in Thanjavur. Seven LTTE men had come there on a boat on June 20 but went back as the killers hadn't reached. Next morning they returned and took back the killers.

An EPRLF member who survived the incident lamented: "Your Tamil Nadu Government would not even allow us to keep a revolver for self-defence. But they allowed the LTTE to roam about freely with AK-47 assault rifles. Today it has happened to us. Tomorrow the people of the state are going to be the victims."

In fact, the people of the state have long been used to the ways of the LITE guerrillas who cross over from Sri Lanka at will in their fibreglass boats, usually powered with no less than six Yamaha outboard engines, to shop for Maruti Gypsies and medicines among

and Rameswaram look lethargic and quite incapable of catching shoplifters let alone LTTE fighters. For example, a a newly-erected police bunker on the Chidambaram-Karaikal road, a fa lungi-clad inspector dozes on a charpoy while five policemen, their antique .303s on the ground beside them, cha merrily. Two light machine-guns res atop a sandbag pile, their operator smoking beedies at some distance They form part of the Tamil Nadi Special Police (TSP), a crackforce commissioned in June to check LTTE move ments. "We don't have enough ment operate shifts. Naturally we are tired, says a TSP sub-inspector.

But clearly, the Tigers are not. They move around like conquerors, brandishing their semi-automatics. They usually anchor close to Tharangambady near an ancient Dutch for which, as a fisherman says, "is an ideal landmark to spot from far". Says at

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permai other g and TEI the mi momen eight-year-old boy about an LTTE visit: "The boats come right up to the beach. Several men with guns are there. It's fun watching the *puligal* (Tigers), just like in those English films."

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The Tigers then usually drive down to the Thirukadaiyur town to fetch their supplies of petrol, diesel and rations. One favourite LTTE haunt is the Vedaranyam wildlife sanctuary which is deserted except from December to February. "They cover the distance of about 18 nautical points to the sanctuary in less than 20 minutes," says P.V.

generate funds from Tamil Nadu. But now they get much of their funds from Sri Lankan expatriates in the West. The LITE also smuggles drugs among other things and organises hawala transactions. It also has sympathisers among the refugees at the Mandapam and Kottapattu camps.

The Government, it is obvious, has been turning a blind eye to the Tigers. In February two persons were killed by unidentifed gunmen near Rameswaram and no effort was made to trace the killers. A month later, 15

POWER APARTMENTS

POWER APARTMENTS

POWER APARTMENTS

PADMANABHA

Rajendran, local Congress(I) MLA.

Near Vedaranyam is a 15-acre coconut grove which the Tigers have leased from a fisherman. They carry on most of their activities from there, including operating their highpowered transmitters, summoning boats from their headquarters, and intercepting police messages. They buy explosives from unauthorised factories in Ranipet, Coimbatore, Salem and Trichengode. The Arul-89 hand grenades which the Tigers use have been traced to a Coimbatore factory. Many of the LTTE wounded are also brought for treatment to this area; there are many doctors here who are paid high fees by the Tigers. Last fortnight 15 wounded guerrillas were arrested in Trichy.

However, the Tigers do not have a permanent office in the state, unlike other groups like EPRLF, PLOTE, ENDLF and TELO. During the early '80s when the militant movement was gaining momentum in Sri Lanka, they used to

customs officials were kidnapped from Muthupet near Pattukottai. That too was not followed up by either the Government or the Opposition. And when hundreds of Indian fishermen were kidnapped and detained at Velvettithurai by the Tigers, the DMK Government praised the Tigers "for saving the Tamil fishermen from the Sri Lankan Navy".

The blitzkrieg at Zachariah Colony has proved once again to the Tamil Nadu Government that the LITE did not become what it is by caring for life and law. And irrespective of the ban that Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi has belatedly clamped on the militant organisations—which include TELO, PLOTE and EROS—there can be no virtually doubt that Velupillai Pirabhakaran's guerrilla group will not only romp through the state but continue to strike at will, more so now that it is engaged in a fight-to-a-finish civil war in Sri Lanka.

---ANAND VISWANATHAN

With fighting intensifying around Jaffna, the casualties will rise even further. So far civilian casualties have been moderate. But that will change since the battle for Jaffna will involve large-scale aerial strafing and artillery fire. For the Sri Lankan Army, smarting under the ignominy of playing second fiddle to the IPKF and then suffering humiliation by the LTTE, the renewed fighting is an opportunity to redeem itself. Says Brigadier A.M.U. Seneviratne: "We may not be as big as the Indian Army, but we can take on the Tigers." The Sri Lankan brass has a point to prove and Jaffna will be their crucial test.

ALSO observing the fighting with interest was the army brass in New Delhi's South Block. In the last few months in Sri Lanka, the PKF soldiers had to live through the nightmare of LTTE attacks carried out with the active collaboration of the Sri Lankan Army. Now there was a sense of satisfaction as well as vindication among the Indian military leadership. "This should convince everyone of two things," said an PKF veteran. "One, that the Tigers are bloodthirsty fascists. And second, that we indeed fought them with our right arm tied behind our back."

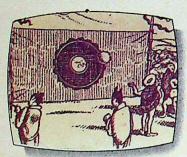
Indian generals refer to the Sri Lankan Army's liberal use of field artillery and aerial bombing though its air assets are limited to one under-strength squadron of ancient Siai Marchetti jets. They recall that on the one occasion the PKF was allowed to call in helicopter gunships, it took Chavakacheri, a Tiger stronghold en route to Jaffna, with just three casualties.

Indian military analysts also believe that unlike the pre-1987 situation the Sri Lankan Army is now a potent fighting force. From 12,000, the army's strength has increased to nearly 50,000 in the past six years. The improvement in firepower and the quality of leadership too has kept pace with the numbers.

Yet if the LITE sticks to guerrilla tactics, it can bleed the army white. "But," says an Indian general, "the Tigers are prisoners of their own machismo." He points out that against the IPKF the Tigers made the blunder of defending a city to the last man, something that goes against the very grain of guerrilla warfare. "They have no choice but to fight for Jaffna again. And the losses will cripple them," he says.

One thing is certain: the Indian Army won't be drawn into the conflict—in either an interventionist or mediatory role. Even if the Government wants to get involved, the army does not

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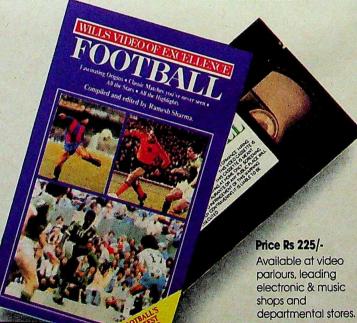
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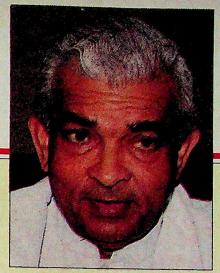
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have the wherewithal. The IPKF headquarters in Madras has been converted into a defensive corps formation and moved to Punjab.

Back in Colombo, there was a feeling of sombre realism about the challenge the Indian Army had faced to safeguard Sri Lanka's territorial integrity. After getting rid of the IPKF, peace



couldn't finish them, no one could. But they forgot that the IPKF had come here not to fight but to keep peace. The IPKF did not want civilian casualties and so did not launch a war. The LTTE also felt that President Premadasa would not fight it as he

wanted peace as soon as possible.

he IPKF got rid of the hardcore elements. What is left is the baby brigade of young boys and girls. They will wet their pants when they meet my army."

RANIAN WIJERATNE

#### "I'll finish the LTTE"

NEVER one to mince words Ranjan Wijeratne, Sri Lanka's gung-ho minister of state for defence, has emerged as the Government's most significant spokesman since fighting began in the north-east. Last fortnight a confident Wijeratne, who has been insisting that LTTE chief V. Pirabhakaran is dead and

his place has been taken by a double, spoke to Principal Correspondent RAMESH MENON in Colombo. Excerpts:

#### Q. Were you anticipating war again?

A. Not at all. In fact, we were deinducting some army detachments from both east and north. We trusted the LTTE and were ready to do anything for peace. But it stabbed us in the back. In fact they were preparing for the war and took us by surprise.

Q. But the LTTE says the war was triggered off by provocation from the Government.

A. On the contrary, we were constantly blamed for being soft on the LTTE. Our president was dubbed naive for giving them so much rope. I even walked out of Parliament when opposition members attacked me for not acting against the LTTE. But I didn't want to sabotage peace talks. Is this provocation?

Q. Do you believe the story that an altercation between the police and a tailor led to the war?

A. Can anyone believe it? This was just an LTTE excuse to launch an attack on the police and army.

Q. What gave them the confidence to fight the war?

A. The LTTE felt if the IPKF

Q. Then why did the LTTE come for talks?

A. It was the only way to get the IPKF removed. It was a question of survival-the IPKF had nearly decimated them.

Q. So you fell into the LTTE trap?

A. We fell into no trap. It is the LTTE that has trapped itself.

Q. Is this a fight to the finish?

A. We do not want to finish anybody. If we are fighting the LTTE today it is only because it forced us to. We can't just sit idle as it runs over police and army camps. But at the moment it seems a fight to the finish.

Q. Will there be a cease-fire?

A. Not until they lay down arms and agree to unconditional talks.

Q. Will you trust the LTTE again?

A. No. How can I?

Q. By when will you take control

with the LTTE was expected to be Premadasa's political coup de grace. But even if that card had failed Premadasa had gained politically, with a wave of patriotism sweeping the country.

Posters praising the army have come up even in the remotest villages in the non-Tamil areas of central and southern Sri Lanka, Volunteers are

of the east and north?

A. It all depends on the LTTE's inefficiency. It will take time to get to the north as we want to consolidate the east first. But we are at it. I finished the IVP. I will finish the LTTE. I'll go for their leaders first.

Q. How many leaders have you got so far?

A. I haven't yet started on my strategy. I need time.

Q. Aren't you underestimating the LTTE?

A. The IPKF got rid of the hardcore elements. What is left is the

baby brigade of young boys and girls. They will wet their pants when they meet my armed forces.

Q. Will you have to ask for India's help again?

A. We are trying to deal with it ourselves. We cannot and should not depend on other countries. Now almost all the Tamil groups are with us, unlike in 1987. They realise they will all be annihilated by the LTTE.

Q. Where will you get arms for such a major offensive?

A. We will purchase arms from wherever they are available. At the moment we have enough but will replenish our stocks whenever necessary.

Q. What about the money?

A. Parliament has already set aside Rs 5 billion for buying arms. We will raise funds required without asking for aid.

Q. Will you go in for sophisticated military equipment?

A. There is absolutely no need for any sophisticated equipment. I will not waste money for a few LTTE boys.

Q. What do you think will be the outcome of the war?

A. We will bring the LTTE to its senses. If it thinks it can take over the Government with the barrel of the gun it is sadly mistaken.

moving in to work for the wounded and the army finds its camps flooded with whatever gifts villagers can afford-tender cocoputs, cooked food, chocolates, cigarettes, even clothes. Says Lieutenant Nalin Jayasinghe: "I have never felt so good and wanted."

Newspapers carry daily appeals for contributions to the national defence fund. The response has been overwhelming. Gokula Shantha Rodrigo, a school student who had kept aside Rs 511 to buy a necklace, said she would rather give it to those fighting the war.

The general mood in the country is one of relief at seeing the LTTE on the

run. Even moderate Tamils feel that the rebels had overreached themselves. The Tigers had alienated the Tamil Muslims and in all Musliminhabited areas there is a great sense of relief. But for Hindu and Christian Tamils the mood is grim as the advancing army and the local Sinhalese drive them out, set fire to their homes and loot their shops. In Trincomalee, 18 refugee camps have sprung up sheltering over 9,000 families. Said one refugee: "We are caught in a death trap. The LTTE cannot defend us now and others will be happy to kill us." Many refugees are angry that the LTTE has brought them to such a pass. An aged Tamilian in Trincomalee who used to be rabidly anti-IPKF now says: "India has a moral responsibility. It just cannot allow us to die."

HEmostremarkable fallout of the fighting is that both sides, the Tamils and the Sri Lankan Government, have forgotten their hatred of the IPKF. Sri Lankans realise what a professional job IPKF had done and the Tamils want it to return to their help.

That seems a vain hope. The Tamils also draw no comfort from noises made

Pirabhakaran: bad timing and miscalculations

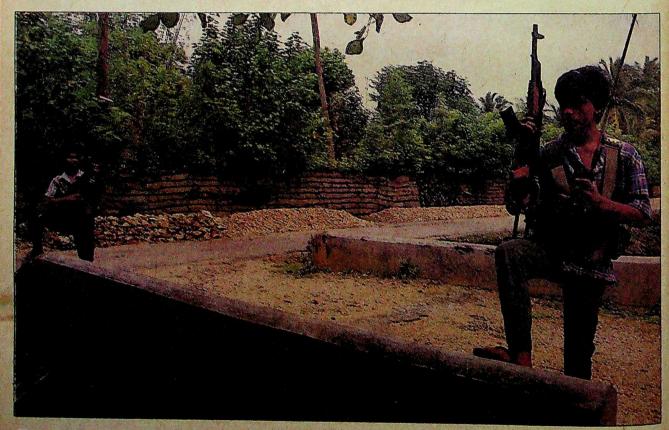
by Rajiv Gandhi against the V.P. Singh Government's neutrality. The Sri Lankan Government, appreciative of V.P. Singh's firm stand on non-interference, is contemptuous of Rajiv. Said a senior official: "Rajiv is like an angry street urchin who would throw at his enemy any pebble he finds. Now he thinks he has found a hand-grenade."

Given the mood in South Block, however, it was unlikely that anything short of a Sri Lankan request for Pakistani help will change the Indian stand on non-interference. "Indian soldiers are not available to solve other people's problems. And it is time someone realised that even the IPKF's brief was to

save the Tamils, not the LTTE," said a senior Indian official, obviously rejoicing at the Tigers' predicament.

That is the LTTE's greatest tactical defeat. In the past they could always count on India to bail them out whenever the going got rough. Now, with even that umbilical link with the regional big brother slashed by their own recklessness they find themselves struggling for survival between Sri Lankan vengeance and Indian indifference.

-RAMESH MENON in Sri Lanka



■ The Tigers are committed to defending Jaffna at any cost, this time with their backs to the wall

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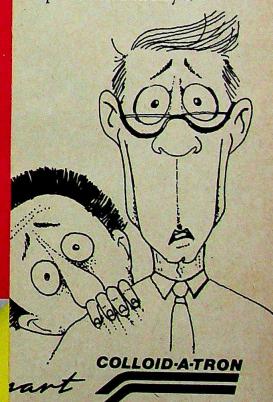


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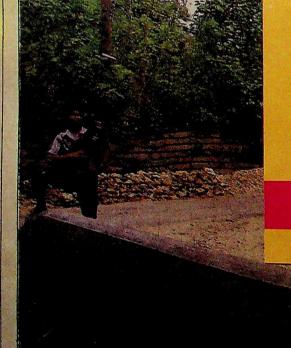
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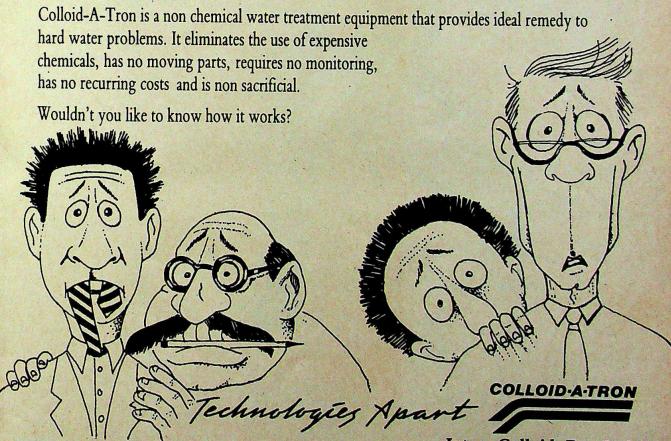
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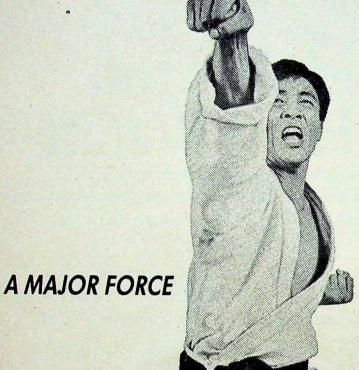


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THE JUDICIARY

# Crisis of Credibility

A rash of controversies in the nation's highest courts spotlights attention on a hitherto sacrosanct institution.



ON the judicial Richter scale, the quake that hit the country's arbiters of law last fortnight was perhaps the worst ever. The epicentre was the arched portals of

the Bombay High Court, where a rash of scandals rocked its 125-year-old foundations. But the after-shocks not only shook several high courts across the country but caused deep cracks in the solid edifice of the judiciary.

The tremors began at a routine hearing of a property dispute presided over by Justices Sharad Desai and Madhukar Kenia of the Bombay High Court in the last week of April. To everyone's shock, Kenia announced his decision to withdraw from the bench. When one of the counsels protested, an agitated Kenia said that he was undertaking a fast to protest against threats he had received in connection with the case. One threat, he added, was that a woman, Thelma Menezes (said to be a friend of Desai) was preparing a dossier to defame him.

Worse was to follow. With the Bombay courts closing for vacation soon after, the battle moved backstage. Desai, in a letter to his chief justice, said Rs 1.5 lakh had been found in the toilet of Kenia's judicial chambers last year. It was claimed that the money belonged to a member of Kenia's staff but Desai wanted an inquiry to be held. It was only when Arvind Bobde, advocate general of Maharashtra, wrote to Governor C. Subramaniam outlining the various charges against Desai that the long arm of justice began moving against itself.

Subramaniam sent the message to President R. Venkataraman. Perturbed, the President spoke to Dinesh Goswami, the Union law and justice minister. Goswami said the Government was "worried over the developments," but was firm that the judiciary, not the

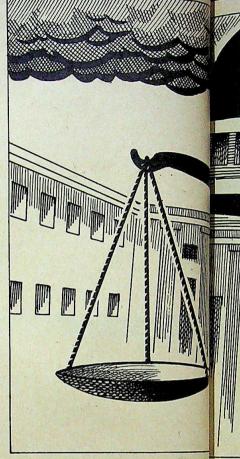
executive, should deal with such situations so as not impinge on its independence. He told INDIA TODAY later: "If the executive starts inquiring into such incidents it may at some time be tempted to utilise it for reasons suited to its own ends." His ministry then apprised Chief Justice of India Sabyasachi Mukharji.

Despite the Supreme Court's being on vacation, the chief justice interrupted his holiday in Calcutta to deal with what he termed "a crisis of credibility". Even as he recommended Justice Desai's transfer to the Kerala High Court more trouble broke out. In an unprecedented development, the principal bar associations in Maharashtra passed resolutions expressing "complete lack of confidence" against four judges including Kenia and asked them to step down or face a boycott.

Meanwhile, Justice Mukharji had flown to Delhi to deal with, among other things, charges in a state government audit report that Justice V. Ramaswamy, a Supreme Court judge, had misused government funds when he was chief justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court last year. With the Supreme Court reopening in July, Mukharji will have to decide how to deal with the situation.

Fresh tremors were felt at the Patna High Court. The bar associations were agitated over the transfer of P.S. Mishra. a senior judge, to the Madras High Court. What caused their ire was that just two days before the transfer orders. Chief Minister Lalloo Prasad Yadav had boasted that some judges would be sent out of the state. A large section of the bar then signed a memorandum stating that the transfer "smacks of political vendetta and executive bias".

As if that were not enough, the chief justice and the National Front Government seemed headed for a major confrontation over the setting up of a national judicial commission to oversee, among other things, appointments of



judges. The bill was introduced in Par liament in the last session, and last week, Mukharji wrote a long letter t the Law Ministry outlining his object tions to it. Some of its provisions, h felt, would undermine the judiciary independence.

The series of shocks jolted the nation's higher judiciary, that had to now remained largely untainted. A Justice P.N. Bhagwati, former chief ju tice, says: "All these incidents indicate that the credibility of the judiciary ha gone down." Adds Soli Sorabjee, em nent lawyer and now attorney gener for India: "The standard of judici integrity seems to have fallen alarm ingly. What we dismissed earlier charges by disgruntled litigants cannot be dismissed summarily now."

Reports from INDIA TODAY CO respondents across the country ind cated that few high courts were in from charges of corruption, nepotist casteism and politicisation of appoint ments. The silver lining: in most courts majority of the judges are still regarde as upright and independent. As form Supreme Court judge V.R. Krishna ly says: "Judicial delinquency seems to escalating at every level. Luckily, it his not yet become pathologically perv sive. It must be arrested now.

It is not as if the erosion of the

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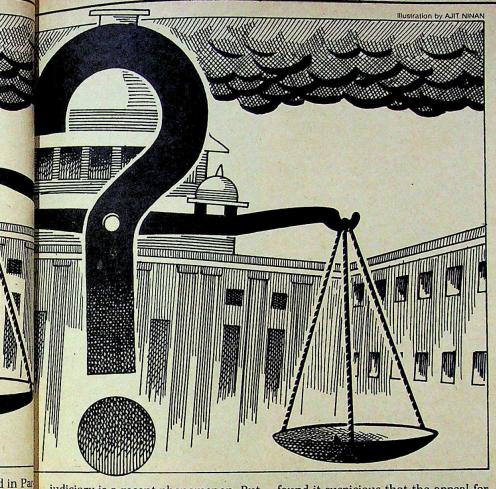
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judiciary is a recent phenomenon. But since the judiciary was protected by the powerful contempt of court law, in which truth is no defence, the rot set in without anybody protesting openly. As K.K. Venugopal, the redoubtable Supreme Court lawyer says: "The subject is taboo and like the proverbial Chinese monkeys one shall not see, hear or speak of this evil. During the early '80s rumours of corruption, nepotism and favouritism were like distant thunder. Now they have got louder."

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UT if recent events in the Bombay High Court are any indication, the lid finally seems to have blown off. For in a series of letters to the governor, Maharashtra Advocate General Bobde outlined allegations against Desai and his links with Thelma Menezes who runs 'Tell Me Travels' from a cubby hole near the high court. Bobde wrote that Desai had taken personal interest in a property case involving Menezes in a city civil court. And there were clear indications that the two not only met regularly at the high court but also that Menezes was using Desai's name to deal with court matters.

Questions were also raised about Desai's keenness to decide a property dispute involving the sons of Chunilal Mehta, a real estate developer. Lawyers found it suspicious that the appeal for injunction which came before the division bench consisting of Desai and Kenia at the end of 1989 was taken up immediately for hearing. As Navroz Seervai, a young lawyer and son of eminent jurist H.M. Seervai, points out: "Why was Justice S.K. Desai so keen to take up the appeal in the Mehta vs Mehta case for hearing and final disposal when it was merely an appeal for admission?"

These charges were still in the realm of speculation. But the day before Kenia announced his withdrawal from the bench, Desai is said to have telephoned one of the counsels, K.S. Cooper, and informed him of Kenia's decision—an unusual step.

Mukharji then recommended the transfer of Desai. But he stated that it was done in the "public interest" and not on the basis of whether the judge was guilty or not. Desai, who was to retire in four months, thought otherwise. As he told INDIA TODAY later: "The transfer order pointed a finger at me and so I resigned." Kenia was to be transferred to the Allahabad High Court. But the orders were deferred because Kenia, a heart patient, was admitted to hospital complaining of chest pain.

Emboldened by the Desai episode, the Western India Advocates Association (WIAA) and the Bombay Bar Associ-



"The credibility of the judiciary has gone down. People's faith and confidence have been shaken."

P.N. BHAGWATI Former Chief Justice of India



"Judges can be corrupt only with lawyers' aid. We need to hound out those who boast of fixing judges."

SOLI SORABJEE Attorney General for India



"We can't use the Brahmastra of impeachment every time. Nor do transfers solve the problem."

L.M. SINGHVI Eminent Jurist ation decided it was time to act against other allegedly erring judges. There was near unanimity on the names of three judges-Justices V.S. Kotwal, Sharad Manohar and G.H. Guttal.

All three have been involved in controversies. N.Y. Gupte, president. City Civil and Sessions Court Bar Association, in a letter to the chief justice of the Bombay High Court, complained that Justice Manohar possessed assets disproportionate to his means. Justice G.H. Guttal had drawn attention for releasing narcotic smugglers and underworld figures on bail in spite of strong opposition from the police. Justice V.S. Kotwal. in a controversial judgement last year, had ruled that L&T was not a Reliance Group company when Reliance itself was publicly claiming that L&T was part of the group. This was a factor that led him to squash the challenge to the Rs 820-crore L&T debenture issue.

The various state bar associations passed resolutions stating that these judges had lost the confidence of the bar. And WIAA President Bal Apte declared: "This is purification. It will have an all India impact. If judges anywhere feel they can get away with anything, they will think again.

The decision of the advocates' association has created a piquant situation. Under the Constitution, the only way to remove a high court or Supreme Court judge is to introduce an impeachment motion in Parliament which must be ratified by a two-thirds majority. But as jurist L.M. Singhvi points out: "Impeachment is like the Brahmastra (ultimate weapon). The process is too cumbersome and the less used the better."

Nor is transfer of judges considered an effective solution. Firstly, there have been several rulings that there can be no punitive transfers. And secondly, as Iqbal Chagla, a senior Bombay lawyer points out: "Desai's transfer would have set a bad precedent." Many jurists felt the bar associations' action could be misused to attack honest judges. As Sorabjee points out: "It has the potential of undermining judicial independence. What we need to do is devise alternative mechanisms to deal with the problem. After all, a judge, like Ceaser's wife must be above suspicion."

Chief Justice Mukharji faces a similar predicament while dealing with the charges of financial irregularity against Ramaswamy. Among the irregularities the audit report pointed out was that against the limit of Rs 38,500 provided. for furnishing his official residence when he was chief justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, Rs 13.41 lakh

was charged. Unjustified purchases of furniture, carpets, attache cases and geysers were said to have been made. And besides an expenditure of Rs 12.95 lakh on four telephones at Chandigarh (including two at his residence), a payment of Rs 76,150 was made for a telephone at his residence in Madras without government approval.

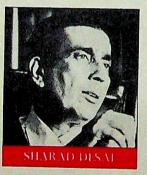


IF there is truth in the charges, fresh problems would arise. As Singhvi points out: "We face an institutional blind alley. That's because we have not reconciled

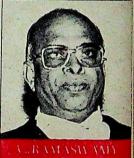
the principle of accountability and the independence of the judiciary." Chief Justice Mukharji is now keen on taking up for discussion a suitable alternative mechanism to deal with such charges at the next conference of chief justices in August. While the consensus is to have an informal collegium of judges in each high court to go into such charges, one thing is clear: none of the justices wants executive interference.

In Patna, however, after the initial









The charges against top judges have raised the need for a mechanism of accountability for the judiciary that does not compromise its independence.

anger over Justice P.S. Mishra's transfer, many advocates feel they may have been barking up the wrong tree. Braj Kishore Prasad, the state's bar council chairman, points out that the decision to shift Mishra had been recommended twice, in June and August last year. The present government only implemented the earlier recommendation and also consulted Chief Justice Mukharji, who took charge in December last.

Mishra himself has been involved in many controversies. Last year while

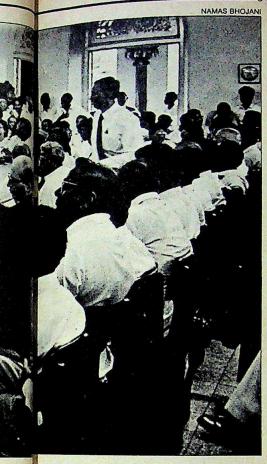
hearing a case against certain co-operatives along with two other judges, U.P. Singh and B.K. Roy, he was found to be related to P.P. Sharma, the then registrar and managing director of the Bihar State Co-operative Marketing Union The then co-operatives minister Ramanand Yadav publicised the relationship. Contempt cases were slapped not only on the newspapers and magazines which carried the report but also on the minister. The judges felt the Government had launched a vilification

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Advocates' meeting: aggressive stand

campaign against them and was trying to "judge the judges before they had judged the case".

What raised eyebrows was not so much the transfer but Chief Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav's outburst that several judges were to be shunted out of the state. It once again brought into the open the politicisation of judicial appointments. While the chief justices of various high courts make recommendations for appointing judges, the final nod is given by the executive. And with court verdicts deciding the fate of many political leaders, the ruling government, as Vyas Dev Mishra, former chief justice of Himachal Pradesh, says, is usually keen to pack the higher courts with "those who are lovel to them. Biblindend ... There are other problems afflicting Mishra, a former Union deputy law minister, adds: "Earlier, due weightage was given to the opinion of chief justices. Nowadays chief ministers and politicians have their say."

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Serious political interference in judicial appointments began in April 1973 when A.N. Ray was made chief justice of India superseding three of his seniors who then resigned. The Emergency saw 16 high court judges inconvenient to the ruling party being summarily transferred. In 1977, Justice M.H. Beg superseded Justice H.R. Khanna as chief justice of India and the latter resigned.

Since then the interference has only increased. Justice Bhagwati recalls how the Government refused to appoint two judges he had recommended. Justice Mishra says that during his tenure not a single recommendation was approved because he refused to accept some names suggested by the government. The quid pro quo is in fact a common tactic and many chief justices succumb to the pressure. As Ram Jethmalani says: "There are only two types of judges: those who know the law. And those who know the law minister." And when P.Shiv Shankar was the Union Law Minister his appointees were jokingly referred to as the "Shiv Sena".

ITH caste and communal considerations creeping in there has been a deterioration in the calibre of judges. Jurists say that the 'panchsheel' of judicial qualitiesimpartiality, integrity, independence, wisdom and learning-is no more the criterion for selection. Says Krishna Iyer: "The focus is on political connections, professional income and communal considerations." Adds K.G. Kannabiran, a civil rights activist: "There has been a steady degeneration-from committed judges to careerist judges.'

The dilly-dallying over appointments has led to the posts of about 80 high court judges lying vacant for almost a year. This backlog, along with the planned creation of another 100 posts, presented the new Government with a Herculean task. In an attempt to end undue interference in the judiciary, the Government has now introduced a bill in Parliament to set up a national judicial commission. The commission is likely to have several senior serving and retired judges who will oversee appointments and make recommendations for filling vacancies on time. Chief Justice Mukharii, however, feels it would lead to further delays and reduce the primacy of the high court chief justices.

high courts. Among them is what is derisively termed the "son-stroke" or "judge uncle" phenomenon. In December, the then chief justice E.S. Venkataramiah reportedly said that in all the high courts several judges had sons and other relatives practising. In Madras and Chandigarh almost half the judges have close relatives practising in the same court. The same applies to a third of the judges in the Bihar and Madhya Pradesh high courts. The Delhi High Court too suffers from the same malady though to a lesser extent.



**DINESH GOSWAMI** 

#### We won't interfere"

UNION Minister for Law and Justice Dinesh Goswami spoke to Special Correspondent RAJ CHENGAPPA on the recent judicial controversies. Excerpts:

On the controversy surrounding Bombay High Court:

The Government has reasons to feel worried about the controversy. But the executive should be cautious in dealing with it. I think it is primarily the responsibility of the judiciary.

On the impeachment of judges facing charges:

Impeachment is a very serious matter. I would not like the executive to take any initiative in such matters. Once a weapon like impeachment is used, the temptation to use it again is very great.

On the need for an effective corrective mechanism:

The higher judiciary should evolve it. If we inquire into the conduct of the judges through some mechanism, then it may be used as a Damocles' sword hanging over the judiciary.

On politicisation of the judiciary:

To avoid all possible executive aberrations and delays, we have introduced the national judicial commission bill for appointment and transfer of judges. I have told any judges approaching me that it would be a disqualification. If you become a judge by pleading your case before a law minister, tomorrow you may also give a judgement because he asks you to.



THE connections are misused in subtle ways. One is what is called the 'You look after my son, I look after your son' technique. Simply put, that means that the

son of a particular judge will not argue his case in his father's court but in a colleague's court. And the colleague's son will do the same with his father's colleague and get favourable hearings. As G.S. Grewal, former advocate general of Punjab, points out: "That sons of judges have a thriving practice in many cases because of their fathers is evident from the fact that their practice declines soon after their fathers retire." However, sons of many judges deny that allegation and claim they have to work twice as hard to prove otherwise.

There are other problems. Venkataramiah had openly complained that there were too many judges who were "out practically every evening wining and dining either at a lawyer's house or a foreign embassy". He estimated the number of such judges to be a shocking 90 of the 450-odd high court judges in the country and had even recommended transferring them.

Coupled with all this is the mammoth backlog of cases. Over two million cases are pending in the 18 high courts of the country. In most of the high courts, if a hearing is postponed, the case would come up again only in 1992. Cases take an average of eight to 10 years to be disposed of. The situation is not any better in the Supreme Court which has over 1.5 lakh cases pending.

So last year, when the Supreme Court allowed a series of hearings on priority, it drew flak from many quarters. Three cases particularly stood out When five Indian cricketers were ban. ned from playing Test matches, a public interest litigation was heard almost overnight as it were. The result was that the Board of Control for Cricket in India quietly backed down. Eyebrows were raised when Justice Venkataramiah heard industrialist Lalit Thapar's bail plea at his residence at night. As also when a division bench headed by the present chief justice heard the L&T debenture issue plea on Gandhi Jayanti. Both Venkataramiah and Mukharii have denied that there were any "calculated designs" in such hearings and pointed out that many cases involving ordinary folk are also heard out of turn

SABYASACHI MUKHARII

# "I feel sorry and very perturbed"

IT'S vacation time for the Supreme Court but Sabyasachi Mukharii, the chief justice of India, clad in a cotton kurtapyjama, looks far from relaxed. Mukharii. 63, has spent the last month trying to resolve the various problems besetting the judiciary. Last fortnight, he took time off to explain his viewpoint to Special Correspondent RAJ CHENGAPPA. Excerpts:

Q. What is your reaction to the incidents in the Bombay High Court?

A. I feel sorry. I am very perturbed by such incidents. If people tell me that I as a judge am not intelligent enough I don't mind. But if they impute that we are not honest then everything is lost. The damage would be so great not only to the institution but to the whole edifice of the constitutional framework.

The issue was not whether the judges had done right or wrong. The issue was whether the functioning of a particular judge affected the credibility of the court. It is only on this aspect that I recommended his transfer. I thought the best way was to disentangle the functionaries from that set-up.

To be candid I'm not one of those who likes to interfere in the high courts. I have a natural revulsion. And nobody likes to transfer judges. This time, I felt if I didn't act I would be completely failing in my duty. It was really a crisis of credibility. The institution has a machinery that tries to rectify it. And it must not allow the crisis to go deeper. That is why action was taken.

Now, I have written to the chief justices to include in the agenda for our annual conference in August whether we should develop some kind of an internal machinery in the judiciary to check these things. I do not want any outside agency to go into this question.

Q. What kind of regulatory mechanism do you have in mind?

A. I should think in case of an allegation against a judge, he should submit himself either to the chief justice or some senior judges nominated by the chief justice and let them look into the matter. Without any formal arrangement, they should hear all the versions and if they find any substance in the charges, then he should demit office. This should be voluntary. Otherwise there is no other constitutional machinery. Impeachment is there but many people say and I'm inclined to agree that in the country's present setup, and just as well, it is practically impossible. The process is just too cumbersome.

Q. Apparently, it is not the Bombay High Court alone that suffers from allegations of misdemeanours.

A. This is a new phenomenon and wherever I have been moving about

there are always some complaints which were never heard of before. Whether they are genuine or not is difficult to decide. I have been telling my colleagues that we must do something about it. This just can't go on.

Q. There are charges of nepotism too in many courts.

A. It is unfortunate that in some courts I have heard about such problems and I'm trying to investigate them. Bail matters never used to come to a high court normally before. Now they do. And in these matters I have heard some relatives of judges are making a lot of money. Whether it is true or not has to be looked into.

But this institution, by and large, functions well. In all courts perhaps, the functioning of one or two judges could be better. But most of the other judges are functioning in a conventional way-correctly, uprightly and honestly. The conduct of a few gets publicity and everyone gets a bad name.

Q. What is the most serious problem confronting the judiciary today?

A. Credibility. What is disturbing is that previously someone said a judge was either pro-government or antigovernment. That was bad because a judge should be independent, fair and just. But to be told now that a judge is not only not fair but you can purchase justice is one of the worst stigmas.

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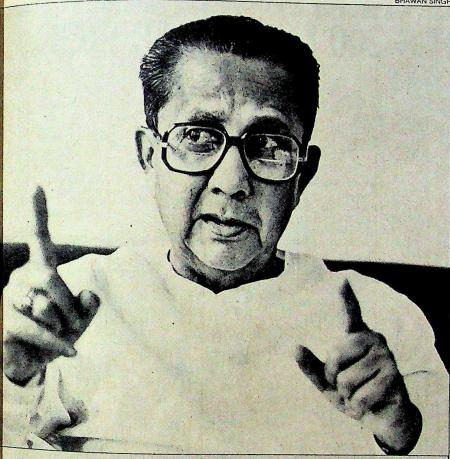
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All this has only aggravated the declining credibility of the judiciary. But the recent cloud of suspicion hovering over the judiciary may yet have a positive outcome. For problems that had crept into the system over the years and were gnawing away at its credibility are

now out in the open. As Ashok Desai, solicitor general of Maharashtra, says: "It is no longer possible to wish away the problem." There is an urgent need to combat it. For at stake is one of the most crucial institutions of our democracy.

—RAJ CHENGAPPA and M. RAHMAN in Bombay with bureau reports

BHAWAN SINGH



Q. The appointment of judges has also become highly politicised. Some chief ministers agree to nominations made by the chief justice of a high court on a quid pro quo basis.

A. I have heard about this kind of thing. People who have held such offices have told me. But in the last six months I have been in office I haven't come across such pressures. No judge has been appointed whom I have not cleared.

Q. The Government has suggested setting up of a judicial commission to sort out problems of delays and bias while appointing judges.

A. I have already expressed my reservations about that. Firstly, I don't want the chief justice of the high court orchief justice of India to be part of or be one among equals of the four or five members of a commission. The primacy of the chief justice's post should

be maintained. Secondly, it would create more delays and deadlocks. If the present system as it exists is worked in the proper spirit, it will solve the problem.

Q. Eyebrows were raised last year when the Supreme Courtgave priority to certain appeals including the Reliance L&T mega issue which you presided over.

A. There are no set rules for hearing appeals. It depends on the chief justice of India who decides on the urgency of the matter. In the Reliance case, I don't remember the details, but there was nothing clandestine or secret although people would like to try and find something sensational in it. I don't think we gave any special priority to Reliance. It is wrong to infer that there was a design or that we favoured a particular group or industrialist. In fact, we hear so many other cases on a priority basis.



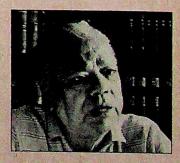
"The fundamental fallacy is that judges are a hallowed species. Justice is too important to be left to judges."

V.R. KRISHNA IYER
Former Supreme Court Judge



"The remedy to corruption is a judicial commission. At the same time, the bar must be vigilant."

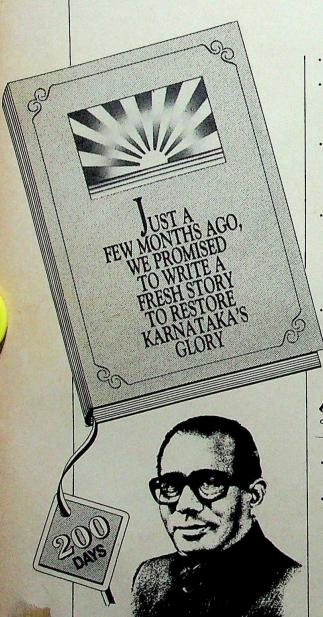
S. MOHAN Chief Justice, Karnataka High Court



These days most judges socialise and are therefore susceptible to influence. This must be curbed."

S.A. MASOOD Ex-Chief Justice, Calcutta High Court

### KARNATAKA IS ALL SET FOR MORE PROGRESS... AS SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL COMPLETES 200 DAYS IN OFFICE.



Shri Veerendra Patil,

- · Administration being toned up.
- A Special High Court Judge being appointed to weed out corrupt and inefficient officers.
- Taking effective steps to curtail false or illegal housing societies, indulging in land grabbing in Bangalore.
- The renaissance of Kannada has commenced. Kannada varsity starting in 1990. A sum of Rs. 1 crore has been set apart for this project.
- Implementation of Committee Reports to promote use of Kannada at all official



- Ban on sale of 'toddy'. harmful to health, implemented.
- Sale of 'seconds' liquor curtailed, resulting in huge earnings to the Public Exchequer which was 'cheated' earlier.



- · Austerity measures to avoid wasteful expenditure being implemented.
- Safeguarding the interest of the State in River and Border
- Maintaining cordial relations with Central Govt. in the best interests of the State.



- Better drinking water facilities in all urban areas, on the anvil.
- · Rs. 8 crores sanctioned for this year to the Cauvery Water Supply Scheme, 3rd stage, to increase water supply to the City of Bangalore. The project will be completed by the end of 1991.



- · Rs. 50 crores earmarked for the development of Hyderabad-Karnataka Region which will remove imbalances in regional development. This is in addition to the Rs. 53 crores allotted for the region under various planned programmes.
- The Karnataka Government is contributing Rs. 37.5 crores towards the share capital of the Konkan Railway Line.



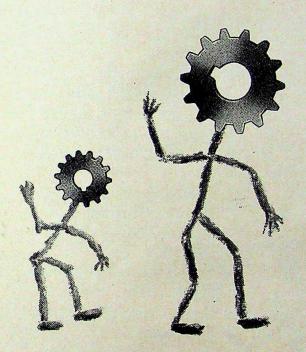
A Bureau of Efficiency and Audit has been established to monitor these various projects and prevent avoidable delays.



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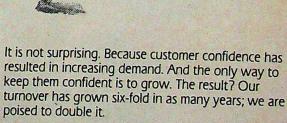
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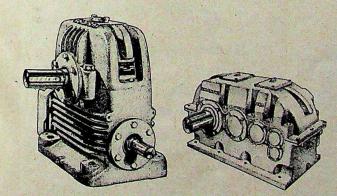
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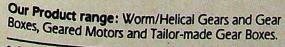


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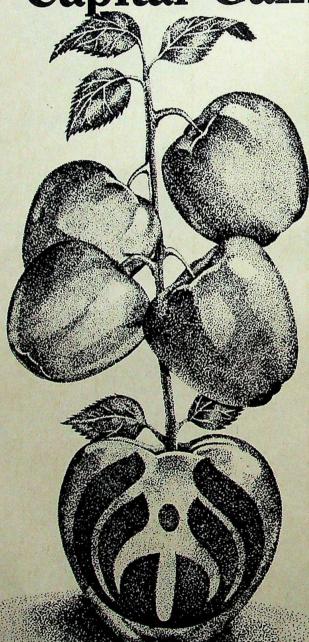




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DEVI LAL

## Busy Mudslinging

#### Nature cure sojourn becomes political conclave

HY should a down-to-earth leader of the farmers who swears by the soil go far away from his terrain to seek nature cure? When the person happens to be Deputy Prime Minister Devi Lal, it must obviously have something to do with political shenanigans.

It is understandable that the busy leader should want to take time off from his onerous duties and his in-

creasingly frequent bouts of political mudslinging to retreat to salubrious Bangalore and cover himself in mud packs. Or after a hectic summer of plunging into one political squabble after another to wallow in a shallow pool of medicated water. No matter that during that time the National Development Council was in session in Delhi discussing the draft for the Eighth Five-Year Plan.

With the advent of Devi Lal, the Institute of Naturopathy and Yogic Sciences, 16 km from Bangalore—where he underwent treatment for an unknown ailment—was last fortnight transformed

into a conclave of political intrigue. And if the list of his visitors was any indication, it seemed that the master tactician was basically preparing the script for hitting back at Ramakrishna Hegde, who he believes was one of those responsible for getting Om Prakash Chautala removed from the chief ministership of Haryana. He had taken the battle to Hegde's home town.

Among the important visitors was Hegde's arch-rival H.D. Deve Gowda who visited Devi Lal five times in four days, not always during the Institute's strict visiting hours between five and seven in the evening. Apart from their common interest in farmers' welfare the two are believed to have discussed the merger of the Janata Party with the Janata Dal. A close associate of Deve Gowda said the merger would depend on the attitude the Janata Dal interim President S.R. Bommai took. "A clear

picture will emerge after the election of the Karnataka Janata Dal president," he said. H.N. Nanje Gowda, Maniram Bagri, and even Dr Subramaniam Swamy, no admirer of either V.P. Singh or Hegde, were the other prominent visitors.

According to an associate of Deve Gowda, the talks related to the consolidation of farmers by a merger of the two parties. The timing is also relevant Hegde was not stepping down even after being "indicted by a parliamentary probe" in the telephone tapping scandal. He also did not forget to take full credit for the Janata Dal triumph by saying that "in the north people knew about my achievements in Haryana and therefore voted in huge numbers for my party".

Before he left Bangalore—he plans to revisit the institute soon—he however paid his token respects to the prime minister saying he would personally not do anything against him. But even then he did not forget to repeat that Singh had shown weakness on the Meham issue and that the Union Cabinet had no right to ask for Chautala's resignation. And, as if to

VISITORS NOT ALLOWED A BELL!

as the powerful and predominantly farming communities of Vokkaligas and Lingayats-Gowda is a Vokkaliga leader and Bommai a Lingayat-are hurt at the Chinappa Reddy Commission report which has recommended that the two communities be dropped from the backward category. The feeling apparently is that if the two communities could be brought together under the Janata Dal it could provide the right mix and impetus for the party to launch its come-back campaign. Significantly, the powerful head of the Vokkaligas, Adi Chunchanagiri Mutt also met Devi Lal.

Devi Lal made no effort to hide the purpose of his nature cure mission. He gave two interviews to *The Times of India* in which he launched an attack on the capitalist press "which tries to destroy those who fight for the villagers", and of course wondered why

make amends for his continuing attacks against the "capitalist press", he said his party would donate Rs 50,000 to the plush Bangalore Press Club.

Whether the five-day stay at the 55-acre institute has fully cured him of his ailments is not known. But since he was throwing around his weight instead of shedding it, the result was that much political rumbling emanated from Bangalore instead of the Haryana Bhawan in Delhi. And so, it was only inevitable that Chandra Shekhar too had a pow-wow with him at the institute, adding to the aura of mystique around Devi Lal's stay.

The Janata Dal, it seems, will now need some political therapy of its own to get over the rancour created within it by the anti-Hegde campaign sparked off by the deputy prime minister's Bangalore sojourn.

-YESHVANTH KUMAR

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IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

#### Flexing his Muscles

#### Nehru spars with V.P. Singh

OR someone his size and stature. Commerce and Tourism Minister Arun Nehru in the recent past seemed to have done the unthinkable: rendered himselfinconspicuous. In the last few months, he'd spent more time touring abroad than in the country. and appeared to have successfully retreated into a political shell. Then suddenly last fortnight he emerged from the shadows in what is an intriguing mix of timing and motive.

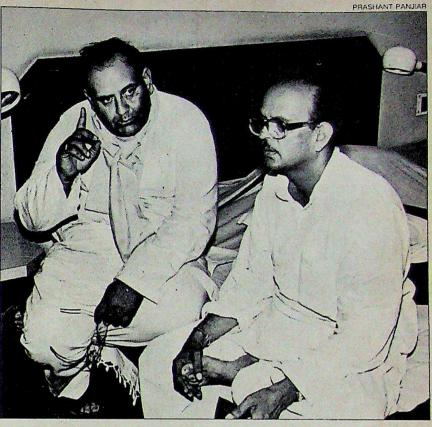
In a series of interviews to the press. he expressed reservations about his own government's 'politics of vendetta', and sparked off a wave of speculation. Why was Nehru speaking out? Did he want to join the Congress(I)? Was he upset with Prime Minister V.P. Singh? Or was it merely a strategy to regain centre-stage?

There is perhaps truth in the speculation that Nehru's relationship with Singh is not as hunky-dory as it may seem. Asked if he was being consulted on issues, he told INDIA TODAY: "The responsibility given to me is the Commerce and Tourism Ministry and I discharge that." The last time Nehru who revels in the role of kingmaker confined himself to talk of his ministry was during his last days with Rajiv.

Nehru's major misgiving concerns this government's preoccupation with investigations into the misdeeds of the last government. Says he: "I have always maintained that once you are voted into power you have to use the present for the future. Anyone who uses it for the past will suffer."

The tourism and commerce minister makes it clear he is totally opposed to the FIR drive. Nehru is reported to have told Cabinet Secretary Vinod Pande that if there was a change in government the first FIR would be filed against Pande and Bhure Lal, the two bureaucrats running the show. Many of Nehru's cabinet colleagues, including Madhu Dandavate and I.K. Gujral have expressed similar sentiments.

But Nehru has been the most vocal—leading to a round of whispering about him being 'worried about the Bofors inquiry'. He is reported to have told the prime minister that FIRs filed



Nehru and Singh: signs of strain

ehru is trying to regain centre-stage by speaking on issues which are agitating cabinet members.

against Satish Sharma and others should not be pursued. Nehru, and some of his colleagues in the erstwhile Jan Morcha, are also having second thoughts about the Sanjay Singh affair. Says one MP: "If I knew Sanjay was having an affair with Modi's wife I would not have defended him.'

It is believed that Nehru, realising that many of his colleagues are opposed to the Government's 'FIR policy', is using the issue as a strategic base from which to bring pressure on Singh. More severe critics insist Nehru is trying to protect his own flanks.

Though the first strains had developed over the election of Mulayam Singh Yadav as Uttar Pradesh chief minister-Nehru was backing Ajit Singh—the flashpoint in the portly minister's relationship with V.P. Singh was Kashmir. On Nehru's advice, the prime minister sent Jagmohan as the governor. But the anti-Jagmohan criticism grew; the Cabinet whisper that the Kashmir governor was consulting only Nehru became louder; and then Jagmohan provoked Singh's ire by dissolving the state Assembly without consulting him. Singh thereon changed his advisors, and the George Fernandes line began to prevail. Today Singh and Nehru have totally fallen out on the issue. Singh is keen that Farooq Abdullah be contacted; Nehru is cynical about any such move.

It seems quite clear that Nehru has been sidelined. And most likely that is the crux of his discomfort. Used to holding the strings of power, he is upset that today his voice is not very powerful. Being a man of strategy. Nehru is working at turning his individual differences with Singh into a consensus. Though his cabinet colleagues question his motives, they agree with his platform: that Singh has to act in a consistent fashion, and he is not doing so.

Nehru is working on two planes. Speaking on issues which are agitating cabinet members and getting the Jan Morcha act together. For instance, he came back from a trip abroad to find Home Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed at the receiving end of a signature campaign. The Mufti, once Nehru's 'man', had later gravitated towards

Singh. But Singh did not come out against the campaign. Nehru did, and taking advantage of the fact that the campaign had been launched by an MP who is close to the prime minister, took up the issue at a cabinet meeting, threatening to resign if such 'gimmicks' were repeated. A grateful Mufti was restored to Nehru's fold.

Today members of the erstwhile Ian Morcha are in closer touch with Nehru than with Singh. The election of the party president was the last occasion when the Morcha faction was influenced by Singh's 'neutrality'. They had decided to support Jaipal Reddy, but Singh declared himself 'neutral'. Says a Morcha leader: "So we became neutral too. The result was Bommai was elected. If Singh wants to hand over the party to Devi Lal on a platter that's his look-out.'

Now the Morcha men have decided to take decisions on their own. For instance, they have decided informally to support R.K. Hegde on the telephone tapping issue and to "defend him against the likes of Chandra Shekhar and Devi Lal". Nehru is making it clear to Singh that the Morcha cannot be ignored. Also, a revived nucleus group increases his bargaining power in case any other permutation emerges. As Nehru says: "Conspiracies have become the order of the day and everyone's meeting everyone.'

So, is he meeting Rajiv Gandhi? Answers Nehru: "I have met him several times. I meet everyone. We fought for an issue. We won. We have a responsibility to discharge. I can either do that or I can start thinking that 10 years ago he did this or that.'

These are not undeliberated remarks. Nothing Nehru says is off the cuff. He knows the impact such a rapprochement could have. Giving further credence to these rumours was the famous meeting between Arif Mohammad Khan (very close to Nehru) and Rajiv Gandhi. Arif has not come out in the open on this; and Nehru refuses to comment.

But then, ambiguity is the aim. It is something Nehru delights in, and joining Rajiv is probably the most distant thought in his mind. For no matter what Nehru's eventual gameplan is, at the moment his options rest firmly within the Janata Dal. His not-so-subtle show of exploring other avenues is perhaps inspired by the need to extract some leverage from Singh. Whether he succeeds depends on how the enigmatic prime minister views Nehru's new aggressiveness. -SEEMA MUSTAFA UTTAR PRADESH

#### **About Turn**

#### BIP takes on Janata Dal



THE Janata Dal-BJP alliance was never made in heaven. So any divorce will be swift and nasty. That's precisely what is happening in Uttar

Pradesh, where the BIP has turned from ally to enemy of the Janata Dal, outdoing even the Congress(I) in hurling abuse at the Government led by Mulayam Singh Yadav.

In recent weeks, the BJP has attacked the Government on every possible ground, from the budget ("pro-



(Clockwise from above) Mulayam Singh Yadav; Azam Khan; and Kalyan Singh: unholy row

industrialist and inflationary") to the conduct of some Janata Dal ministers. Leading the BJP assault is the party's leader in the Assembly, Kalyan Singh.

The reason for the BJP's hostility is obvious: Yadav's position on the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute. By arresting the Shankaracharya of Dwarkapeeth, Yadav had made it clear that his government would not allow the dispute to be settled outside the courts. The BJP is, expectedly, displeased. Says the party's General Secretary Kalraj Misra: "If Yadav thinks that he can deal with the VHP and the BJP in the same way as he did with the Shankaracharya, he is sadly mistaken. When we start constructing the temple, there will be a big crowd participating from his own constituency. Jaswantnagar. There'll be people who will lay down their lives if the need be. Let's see what he does then. '

Misra will have to wait till October 30-the "non-negotiable" date set by the VHP last fortnight to begin construction of the temple—to find out And that Yadav has become a thorn in the side of organisations' backing the temple construction became evident at the Hardwar meeting where the date was fixed. Speakers at the meet likened him to Ravana, and punning on the Hindi meaning of mulayam, one said they had ways of softening him up.

Before fighting that battle, however, the BIP is training its guns on Janata Dal ministers. The BJP's main target has been Azam Khan, former convenor of the Babri Masjid Action

Committee (BMAC) who Yadav had inducted as a cabinet minister. An official of a state guest house alleged that Khan abused him for not completing repairs in the bathroom of his suite. Khan admitted he had been tough but said he had done so because the official refused to do the work despite repeated complaints.

The bathroom fracas was



made into a virtual cause celebre by the BJP, which charged Khan of 'misconduct'. But the crux of the BJP's stand is the belief that Yadav is taking a partisan stance in the mandir-masjid dispute. Says BJP State unit President Rajendra Gupta: "The presence of Khan in the Ministry shows the Government is sympathetic to the BMAC.

Some Janata Dal leaders feel the BJP is doing all this on instructions from its Central leadership, and with a clear aim in mind: to pressure the Government into a pro-mandir stance. But with Yadav digging in his heels on the issue, the BJP-Janata Dal battle is certain to hot up in the coming weeks. -DILIP AWASTHI



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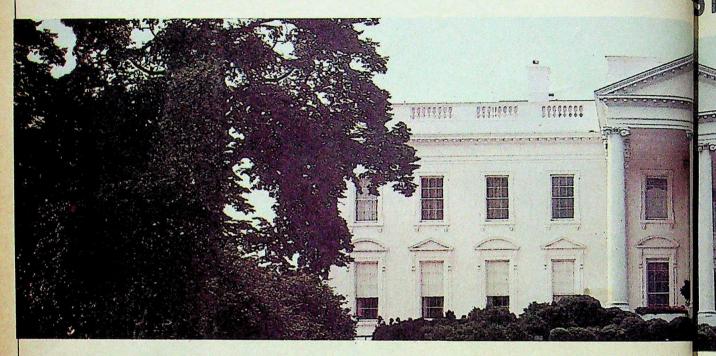
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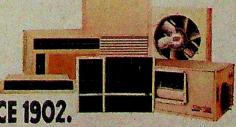
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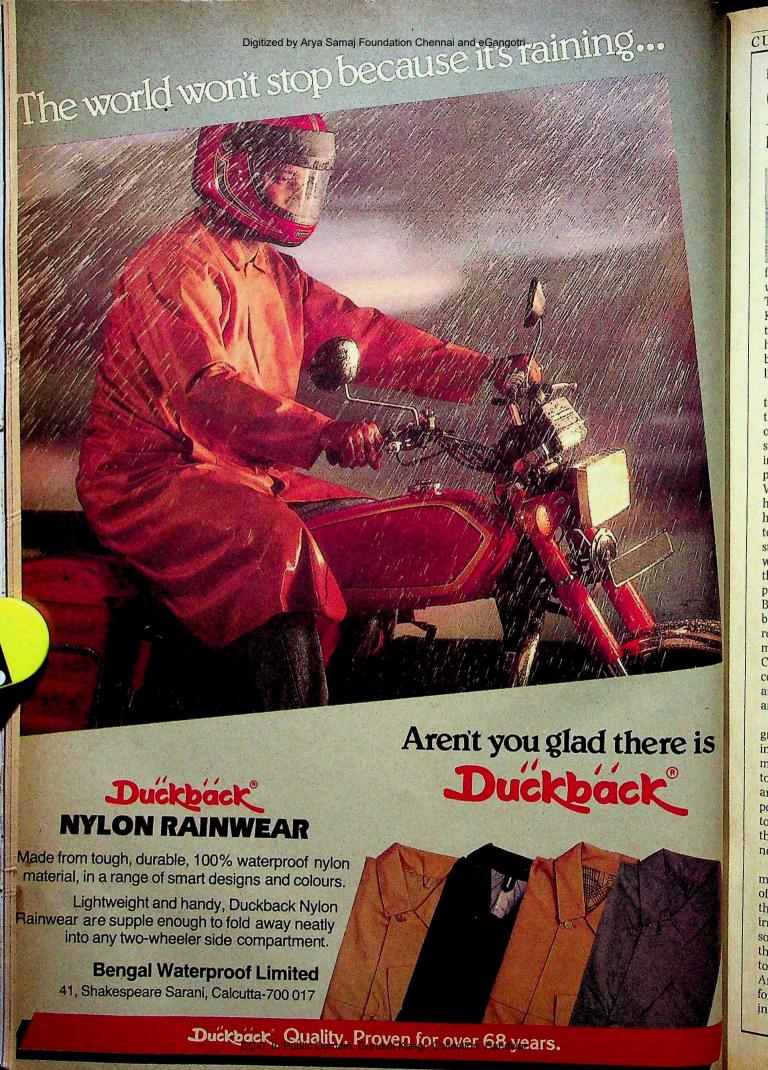
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JAMMU & KASHMIR

#### **Curious Move**

#### Farooq is sounded out



THE pattern is predictable; Punjab has suffered it for the last eight years. A soft response to incipient terrorism; when that fails mete out 'bullet

for bullet'; and when that leads nowhere, seek the political dialogue. Then repeat it all, ad nauseam. In the

Kashmir valley, it is time to try and show that the hardline is on the back burner, and the political line is being reeled out.

Predictably, an attempt is on to ensnare the former chief minister of the militancy-ridden state, Farooq Abdullah, to initiate the political process. Prime Minister V.P. Singh has expressed his willingness to talk to him. And Railways Minister George Fernandes stopped by in London—where Farooq has been for

the last several months—ostensibly to persuade him to come to Delhi for talks. But apparently Farooq is not biting the bait. He reportedly said: "Let the terrorists fight it out; and then if you need me, call me." Later, the Indian High Commissioner in UK, Kuldip Nayar, convinced him he should go to Delhi and discuss the matter. Dates were announced; then suddenly retracted.

Not surprisingly, it is the Congress(I) that is particularly interested in Farooq's return. The party spokesman, M.J. Akbar, admits he has been in touch with the former chief minister, and claims he is the "only Kashmiri politician who can deliver". According to Akbar, Farooq is reluctant to take up the Government offer because it has not been clearly spelled out to him.

is

Interestingly, even as the Government sends out feelers to Farooq, most of its ministers are of the opinion that the former chief minister is totally irrelevant in the valley today. In fact, some even assert that "sending him to the valley will be like showing a red rag to the bull". Says Commerce Minister Arun Nehru: "The man has been away for three months. He's clearly not interested, for if you have to do any-

thing, you have to do it from upfront, not from the rear." Working against Farooq is his reputation for frivolity and mismanagement. Even the Left, which initially favoured Farooq's return, is having second thoughts.

However, the Farooq card is not the only, but merely the foremost of several political options the Centre is probing. Sources reveal Home Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed is initiating talks with other Kashmiri leaders. Of these, Congress(I) member Ghulam Rasool Kar is the front-runner, and the Mufti is reported to have had a meeting with him. Kar, who is unanimously described as a 'good man', is slowly

BHAWAN SINGH

emerging as a consensus candidate. Other names being mentioned include Abdul Ghani Lone. Qazi Nissar, and Pyarelal Handoo.•

Meanwhile, with all the ministerial assistants withdrawn, the Mufti has been left solely in charge of Kashmir's affairs, and is making almost daily trips to the Valley. The Mufti insists the time is ripe for initiating the political process. He feels the people have realised that the Centre is never going to give up Kashmir, that Pakistan is not prepared to intervene, and that their future lies with India alone. Hence, the people are willing to be won over, and the democratic process can be restored, so long

as the Constitution is not violated.

But considering that most of the state's politicians have publicly dissociated themselves from the nationalist parties ("The list is very long," the Mufti admits), the home minister's optimism seems unwarranted. Especially as the Centre remains divided on the issue of both the man and the means that could bring succour to the valley.

-SEEMA MUSTAFA

**FAROOQ ABDULLAH** 

#### "I've other commitments"

FAROOQ Abdullah, currently on extended holiday in London, spoke to Special Correspondent SEEMA MUSTAFA on the telephone about the latest moves on Kashmir. Excerpts:

Q. When are you coming back to India?

A. I have some work to complete. So perhaps I will be back in a week or so.

Q. Have George Fernandes and others been in touch with you? Do you know that the Government wants to talk to you about Kashmir?

A. No. No one has been in touch with me. I have received no communication whatsoever from anybody.

Q. Have you been in touch with Rajiv Gandhi?

A. I have not been in touch with anybody at all.

Q. What kind of political option are you willing to discuss with the Government?

A. I don't know. I left Kashmir many months ago. I have to come back and meet my people, meet my party members. I have to meet everyone and then see.

Q. Are you interested in returning to Kashmir politics?

A. Kashmir is my home.

Q. Then why have you left it in these troubled times?

A. I have other work, other commitments.

Q. But you have been away for more than three months.

A. I had to be away. I have a lot of work here.

Q. By going away to England at this crucial time haven't you abdicated responsibility?

A. I don't know. I don't know. I have no answer.

THE MIRWAIZ

#### **Tight Spot**

#### Teenager's crucial role

N the maelstrom of Kashmir's politico-religious militancy, he resembles the proverbial sacrificial lamb. Till the other day, he was just another teenager in jeans. A fusillade of gunshots changed that dramatically, catapulting the 16-year-old schoolboy, Umer Farooq, into the most sensitive religious seat in the turbulent state—as the new Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir, successor to his father Mirwaiz Moulvi Farooq who was mysteriously slain by unidentified assassins.

As head sermoniser of the historic Jama Masjid in Srinagar, on his young shoulders rests the awesome responsibility of giving religious and political direction to the valley's Muslims. Having inherited the title of Mirwaiz—in the family for the last 600 years—the first taste of things to come was at the fateha ceremony where the late Moulvi was laid to rest. A traumatised Umer wasintroduced to the 3-lakh gathering amidst chants of "we want freedom", while masked militants fired their Kalashnikovs in the air.

It is in the movement for independence that the new Mirwaiz—the youngest person to hold the title—is trapped. "My endeavour is to carry on

Umer (left) with father; and as the Mirwaiz: boy priest





the mission of my father," says Umer. The mission according to him is to fight for the demand for self-determination, which he explains to mean, "the granting of fundamental rights to the Kashmiris". He hesitates, like his father did, in openly espousing independence. Surrounded by advisors, Umer is not allowed to do much talking. Both he and his advisors are wary of discussing the militants and their goal. "Our paths are different, but the aim is the same. We first want the atrocities against the Muslims to stop. Let there then be a UN sponsored referendum. Let the Kashmiris decide whether they want to be with India, with Pakistan or with neither," says Mohammad Vakil, secretary of the Awami Action Committee, the political wing headed by the Mirwaiz.

In Jama Masjid every Friday, where the Mirwaiz gives a sermon after the afternoon prayers. Umer is ill-at-ease, surrounded by gun-wielding militants and a mass of frenzied people screaming for azadi and burning the Indian flag. Umer normally restricts his speeches to the atrocities being committed by the paramilitary forces and appeals to the islamic nations—as also to George Bush and to Mikhail Gorbachev—to persuade India to agree to the holding of a referendum.

For the time being, however, his family proposes to send him to Al Azhar in Cairo for a five-year course in Islamic studies. Till then, Umer will have no choice but to ride the militant tiger stalking the valley.

-HARINDER BAWEJA



NAGALAND

#### Risky Return

#### Vamuzo stages a comeback



A strange political animal was born in Nagaland last fortnight after a messy round of political head-hunting. The state saw the installation of its third

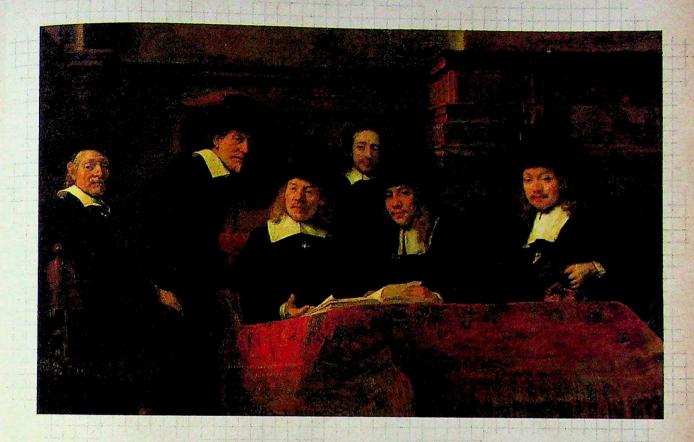
government since January 1989. This one, led by former underground leader Vamuzo had partly the same composition as the one it replaced, owed allegiance to the National Front as its predecessor had, and yet had an alliance with the Congress(I) which claimed 15 of the 21 ministerial berths.

Both Vamuzo and former chief minister K.L. Chisi claim to lead the "real" Nagaland People's Council (NPC). Vamuzo, who heads the present NPC-Congress(I) coalition, was himself expelled from the NPC by its executive council. But he now has the support of a majority of the party's legislators who dumped Chisi. And like Chisi, he too has the blessings of the National Front. To cap it all, claiming to be a loyal member of the NPC, Chisi insists on sitting on the treasury benches. I.K. Sema, deputy chief minister, even has a justification for this strange mix-up: "The need of the hour is a government by consensus. Even the prime minister has spoken in favour of consensus."

Vamuzo took another tack. "The parliamentary system is not conducive to conditions prevailing here," he said and blamed the state's plight on "the political immaturity of the Nagas".

The drama actually began in May when 12 Congress(I) legislators withdrew support from the S.C. Jamir min-

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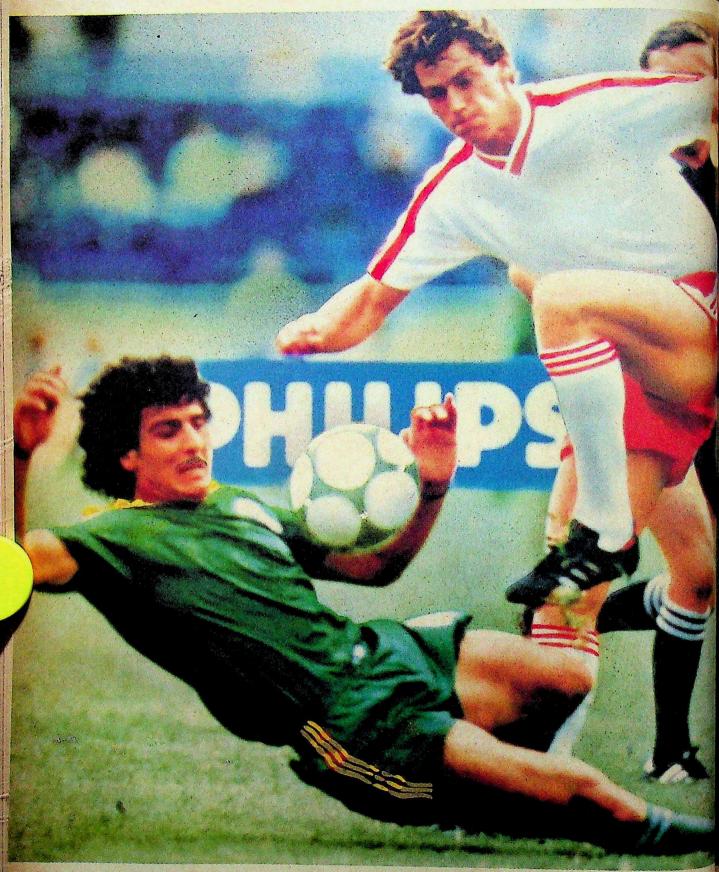
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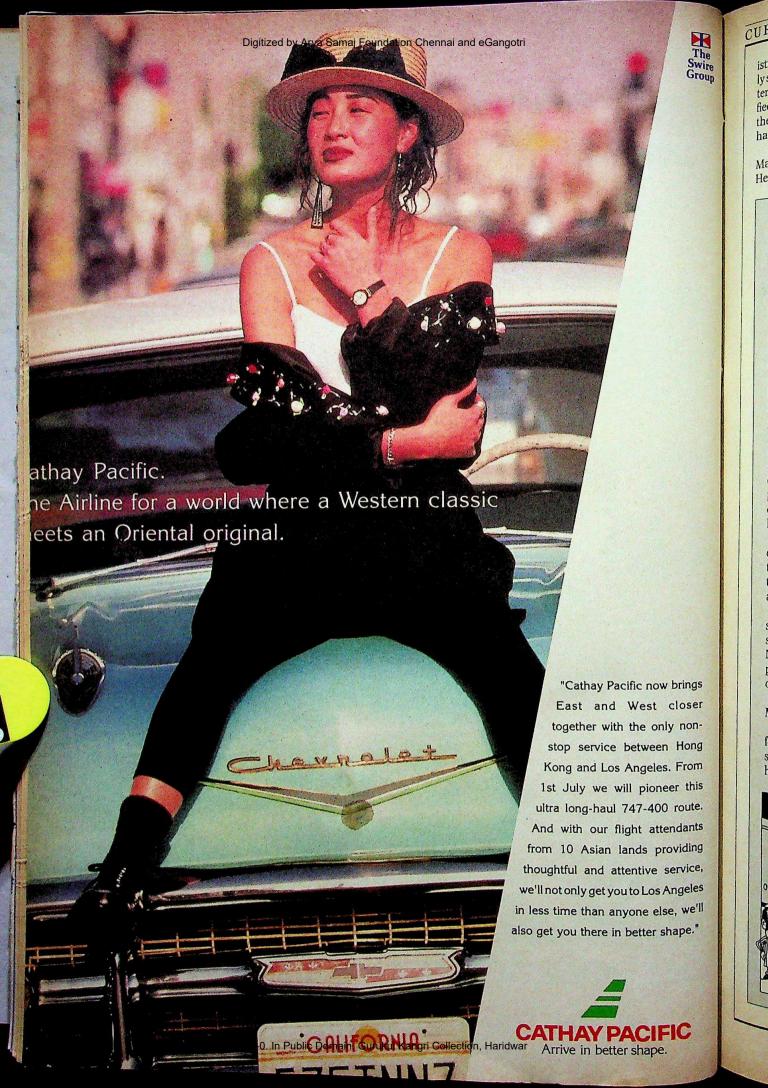
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istry. Governor M.M. Thomas promptly swore in Chisi as the new chief minister but Speaker T.N. Ngullie disqualified 10 of the 12 Congressmen under the Anti-Defection Act. The other two had been expelled by the Congress(I).

Yet Chisi won a confidence vote on May 31 as the Congress(I) boycotted. He did not survive long

enough to tell the tale. A fortnight later, 22 of the NPC legislators withdrew support, forcing him to resign.

Inheriting a government which is politically as well as financially bankrupt, Vamuzo can't look forward to happy times. His predecessors' profligacy—they spent Rs 686 crore against

a budget of Rs 350 crore-has left Nagaland near-bankrupt. The Centre is unwilling to subsidise the state. His legislators would demand investment in their constituencies as the price for support. For Vamuzo, known to be one of Nagaland's most resilient leaders, it will be a daunting test.

-UTTAM SEN GUPTA

#### BOTTOMLINE BY D. BUNKER

#### IT seems a pity that India has gone unrepresented in the World Cup. Specially with the abun-

**Soccer Stars** dance of talent available in the country. Here's the ideal Indian World Cup team.

#### FORWARD LINE

Chautala: Known as the 'Mar-do-na' of India. Chautala has displayed the ability to bludgeon the opposing line-up into craven submission and can cause mayhem in his favourite position as a striker. He can also bang the ball home from any distance (the father the better). Weaknesses: has a propensity to collect too many vellow cards, leading to occasional send-offs.

Rajiv Gandhi: Failed to live up to his initial promise when he first captained the team. Yet, showed remarkable resilience and staying power in the face of heavy odds. His Italian connection also means he will be playing in front of home crowds. Weaknesses: his habit of rushing headlong into situations where he can find himself ruled off-side.

Chandra Shekhar: Slippery as an eel. In many encounters, he's revealed his prowess at sneaking past the most solid of defences. Has great stamina and picks the right moment to strike. Weaknesses: over-ambitious at times. Not much of a team player. Prone to own-goals.

Amitabh Bachchan: Reached great heights some seasons ago when he was India's number one player but seems to have gone into something of a decline since. Nevertheless, still has star quality and his long reach has proved useful for heading in corner kicks. Weaknesses: only seems to play well under Rajiv's captaincy.

#### MID-FIELDERS

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V.P. Singh: Ideal for the crucial position of 'sweeper' for his ability to switch from the left flank to the right. His sneak attacks are legendary and many an opposing side has regretted underestimating his abilities. Weaknesses:

not decisive enough. Took over as captain only seven months ago and is still to get his act together.

Win Chadha: A useful

midfielder hailed as India's best middleman in decades. Famous for popping up in the most unexpected places. Weaknesses: not much known about his form since his transfer to a United Arab Emirates club.

George Fernandes: Has been in and out of the team but is useful for making dangerous forays into enemy territory. Weaknesses: rebellious in nature and attempts to dribble past too many defenders. Under FIFA's new rules, could be in trouble for being improperly attired.

#### BACKS

Devi Lal: His keenness to be leading the team can be judged from the fact that like Maradona, he shed excess weight before the crucial contest in a special health clinic. His intimidating tactics can blunt any attack and his nuisance value is a potent weapon for any side. Weaknesses: has some well-known blind spots and in recent months has lost some of his striking power.

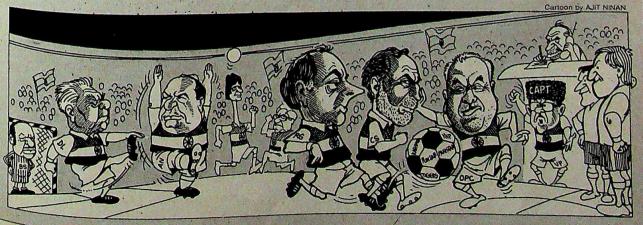
Arun Nehru: A formidable presence in any side, his form of power play means he cannot be ignored. Is a master tactician making him a key player in any defensive formation. Weaknesses: tends to be overweight and his arrogance has led to his being sidelined recently.

#### GOALKEEPER

B. Shankaranand: Rose from relative obscurity to become the best goalkeeper in the country when he blocked all attempts by the opposition to score a goal in the Bofors Cup. Weakness: loyalty to individuals rather than the team.

#### MANAGER

R.K. Hegde: Mainly chosen for his proficiency to tap into strategy sessions of the opposing side. Good at planning. Weaknesses: many.



FODDER SCANDAL

### More Charges to Chew

#### Show-cause notice pinpoints the irregularities

ODDER production machines had, in an ironical twist, provided fodder for an attack on the Congress(I) in May last year, when the party was in power. And the principal target of the opposition cannon was Balram Jakhar-then Lok Sabha Speaker-who was charged by the media of abetting customs duty evasion in the import of 50 fodder making machines.

Now, a show-cause notice issued by the collector of customs, Madras-

of which INDIA TODAY has obtained an exclusive copy-bears out the media charge that the import of the fodder manufacturing machines was not above board. The showcause notice adds meat to the bare bones of the newspaper stories by listing in a chronological order the sequence of events and recording statements a farmers' organisation—which in this case happened to be the Congress(I)sponsored Bharat Krishak Samaj (BKS), headed by Jakhar.

But that did not happen and instead Sanjeevani hypothecated the machines to various state finance bodies to raise loans-part of which were inforeign exchange—totalling Rs 3.74 crore. Besides, it is charged that Sanjeevani smuggled in six extra fodder manufacturing machines, of which five were sold to government

The notice makes it clear that many serious violations had taken place.





of some persons involved in the import of the machines.

The scandal hinges on an extraordinary customs duty exemption that the Bombay-based Sanjeevani Fodder Production Private Ltd was awarded in 1987 for importing 50 fodder machines from its foreign collaborators, Fometa Overseas SA, a Madrid-based company owned by John Richard Brady. The exemption was given on the grounds that the machines would be donated to

The fodder production machines; and Jakhar: pious protestations

institutions. Jakhar personally wrote letters recommending the machines to various state governments.

The show-cause notice points out that while availing of total exemption from customs duties. Sanjeevani gave an undertaking that it would donate the 50 machines to BKS within 15 days and that BKS would use the machines only for demonstration and training of farmers and would not sell or transfer them for five years.

However. the savs Sanjeevani suppressed from the customs authorities the fact that its machines and other assets had been hypothecated to the Andhra Pradesh Industrial Development Corporation (APIDCO), the Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment (RIICO) and Corporation Pradeshiva Industrial and Investment Corporation of Uttar Pradesh (PICUP). to raise loans.

The notice quotes Dinesh Dubey. director of Sanjeevani. Says he: "... As of today, these units stand in the ownership of Sanjeevani Fodder Production Private Ltd....I may further clarify that this is necessary in terms

of the agreement for financial assistance arrived at between Sanjeevani and the financial institutionsi.e. APIDCO, PICUP and RIICO.

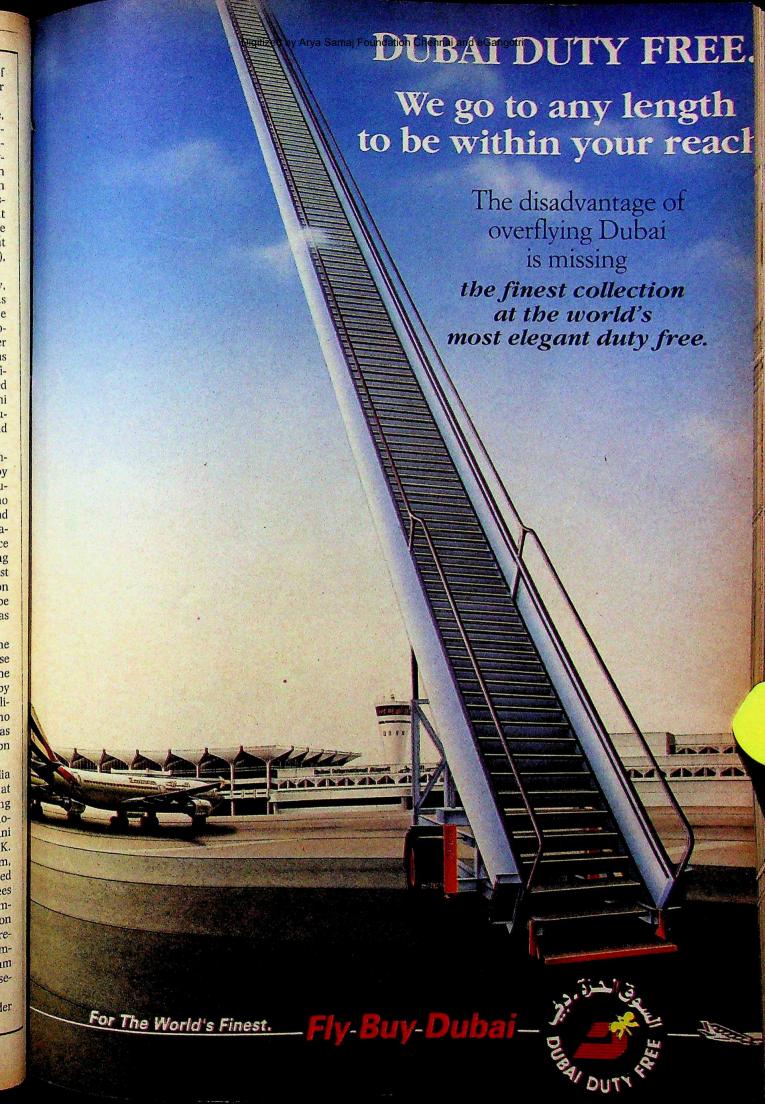
This statement combined with one given by S.S. Khandelwal, the auditor of Sanjeevani, who claims the company had included the fodder machines in its draft balance sheet for the year ending

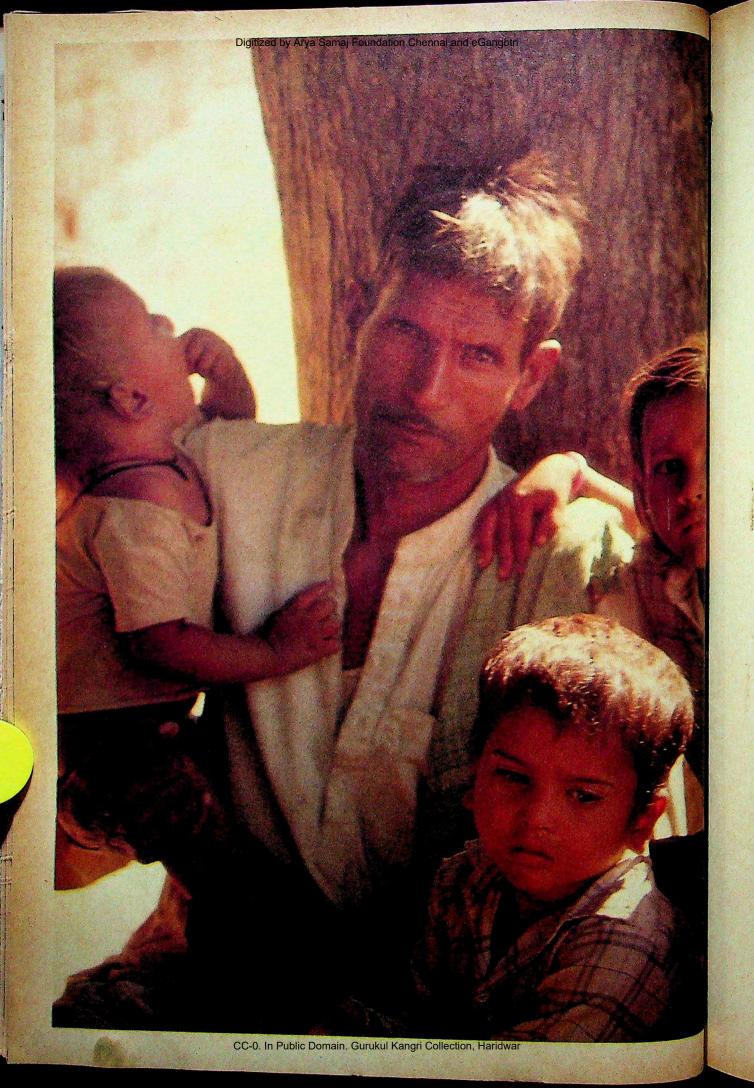
March 31, 1988, suggest that the first condition of the ad hoc exemption order-that the machines would be handed to BKS within 15 days—was

As for the second condition of the exemption order-that BKS would use the machines only for training-the notice says that evidence collected by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), Madras, shows that no such demonstration or training, as envisaged in the ad hoc exemption order, was organised.

While Dubey and Fometa India Director J.R. Taneja maintained that "some" training of farmers was taking place at Bolaram, Hyderabad, the notice points out that the Sanjeevani Regional Manager at Hyderabad, P.K. Mathew, and site manager at Bolaram, Roy John, have "categorically stated that only a few of their own employees have been trained and that no demonstration or training of farmers on behalf of BKS had taken place". Moreover, the question of training commencing at sites other than Bolaram does not arise as the machines elsewhere were not operational.

Further, the DRI found that fodder

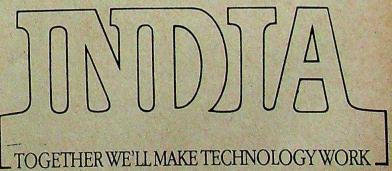




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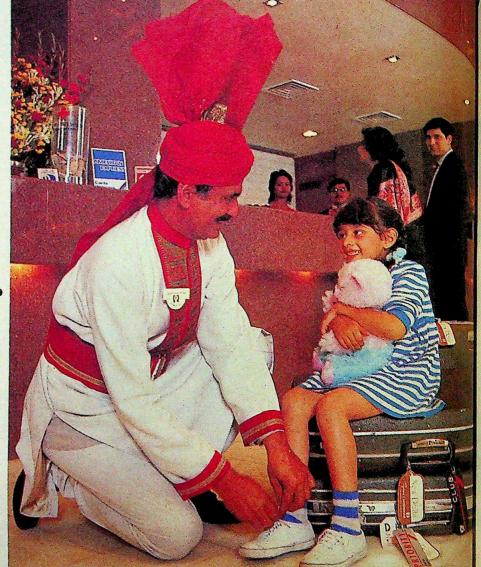
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produced at Bolaram was being sold for 70 paise a kg. Dubey has stated that the revenue generated from the sale was being used by Sanjeevani to repay the loans taken from the state finance

Another grave irregularity according to the notice was the assembling of six additional fodder machines from spare parts—in violation of the import policy for spares—that came with the original 50 machines. Five of the six were then sold to government agencies—apparently at the behest of

Jakhar. Directly in the firing line are Sanjeevani. Fometa India and BKS, whose executive chairman Prabhakar Reddy has been accused of "actively conniving with Sanjeevani in the matter of non-fulfilment of both the conditions of the exemption order". Reddy, who, according to the show-cause notice, had claimed that the 50 machines were donated to BKS, has all along absolved Jakhar of any blame. "If there is any flaw, I take full responsibility for it. Balram Jakhar, who heads the organisation as only honorary chairman has been unnecessarily dragged into this affair, just because he issued a letter as chairman of BKS to promote the interests of the farmers of the country," he has said.

Though Reddy is challenging the show-cause notice in court, a customs official in Madras warns: "They may gain some time, but they can't go far. As penalty, we can charge five times the assessed value of the imported machines and if prosecution is launched many of these people could land in jail." But a senior dri official points out that Jakhar is unlikely to be dragged into the picture all over again as Reddy has claimed responsibility on behalf of BKS.

Jakhar—who is now a general secretary of the AICC(I) though he lost during the last Lok Sabha elections—of course, still claims to have been motivated by lofty ideals like the upliftment of farmers. "As a person deeply interested in the farmers' welfare, I thought the machines were of great value. A malicious campaign was unleashed to wrongly involve me in the so-called fodder controversy. It (the recommendation) was made in good faith, against the background of two successive droughts," he says.

In spite of such pious protestations, the many unanswered questions ensure that the fracas will continue to provide fodder for controversy.

-ANAND VISWANATHAN

LEFT FRONT

#### **Tainted Win**

#### Violence mars civic elections

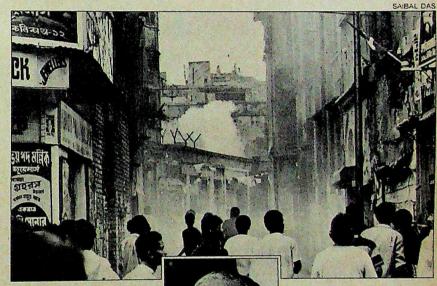
T is a reflection of West Bengal's abrasive politics, that even corporation elections in Calcutta make national news. Last fortnight these local polls saw the Left Front scoring a spectacular victory, winning 100 of the 141 seats, with the CPI(M) alone bagging 72. In the last election in 1985, the Left Front had a razor-thin majority of two members and another photofinish was felt to be on the anvil. But the pundits were proven wrong as the Congress(I) was reduced in its

alleged the pictures were stage-managed to tarnish the Left Front's image.

Chief Minister Jyoti Basu reiterated the charge, but nagging questions remained unanswered. Why was no repoll ordered in the ward in question? Why did the police not act against the hooligans? Worse, why was the state Government refusing to divulge reports furnished by poll observers under the plea that they were confidential?

Out of power for the last 13 years, the Congress(I) organisational structure has been crumbling, one reason for the party's debacle. Said Basu: "The party obviously failed to mobilise its people so that even its genuine supporters did not venture out to vote."

The debacle was particularly galling for the Congress(I) because even



traditional bastion of Calcutta to a poor second with only 37 seats.

Yet, more than the results what made news was the welter of charges and counter-charges traded by the two political

parties. An angry Somen Mitra, wbpcc(1) general secretary, declared: "It was worse than Meham." The Left Front's outgoing mayor of Calcutta, Kamal Basu, retorted: "False voting and booth capturing have been inevitable parts of bourgeois elections."

Mitra's accusation was supported by most city newspapers, which published tell-tale pictures of hooligans brandishing pistols and bombs right under the nose of the police. In retaliation, the CPI(M) mouthpiece Ganashakti reproduced the same pictures next day, identifying the hooligans as Congress(I) agents. To buttress its claims, Ganashakti provided the names and addresses of the hooligans, and

Bomb blast during poll; and Basu: serious charges

in the 1989 Lok Sabha polls, in the midst of an anti-Congress(I) wave, it had led in 97 of the 141 wards. But this time it lost

60 of those 97 wards by overwhelming margins. Many in the Congress(I) blame former Punjab governor S.S. Ray for the defeat. While campaigning Ray had urged the people to "cast votes as in 1972"—the 1972 assembly election was won comfortably by the Congress(I), but was marked by violence and rigging. Ray's statement not only created apprehension, keeping people indoors, it also provoked the Left Front to flex its muscles and display unity.

Even as the Congress(I) toys with the option of boycotting the corporation in protest, the mauling once again highlights the party's steadily diminishing hold on the West Bengal electorate.

—UTTAM SENGUPTA

# 200 EMPLOYEES WALKOUT OF BOMBAY OLL

What's more startling is that all 200 of them are joining a new company called Marico. How did this happen? And why?

ombay Oil has formed a new company — Marico Industries. And their entire Consumer Products Division of 200 people now works for Marico.

Mr. Mariwala, one of the board members, clarified an important issue. "Marico is a wholly owned 100% subsidiary of Bombay Oil. The Board of Directors for both remains the same."

Why is a totally new company being formed? "The idea is to give a new thrust to the consumer products business. As a company, Marico will have greater autonomy than before. So it can independently make business decisions."

Mr. Arun Kaul, the ex-Marketing Manager of Bombay Oil, now the Marketing Manager of Marico, was jubilant: "This is a great way to start a new company! With brands



'A deliberate, planned move,' says insider. that are already leaders — Saffola and Parachute. Saffola is known for the marketing history it made with its 'good-for-the-heart' safflower (kardi) oil. The other brand, Parachute, has breakthroughs to its credit too. It's the first strong brand in what was till recently a commodity market. And enjoys a strong consumer franchise."

Another advantage Marico has is the ready-made strengths of its parent company. Like the distribution network of 2 lakh retail outlets and 1200 distributors. Financially, it is as good as any blue chip company. It has a turnover of nearly Rs. 100 crores. Sales have grown at 25% per annum over the last 4 years (compounded growth rate).

What are Marico's future plans? Mr. Mariwala admitted that a lot of changes were in the offing. "We've CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

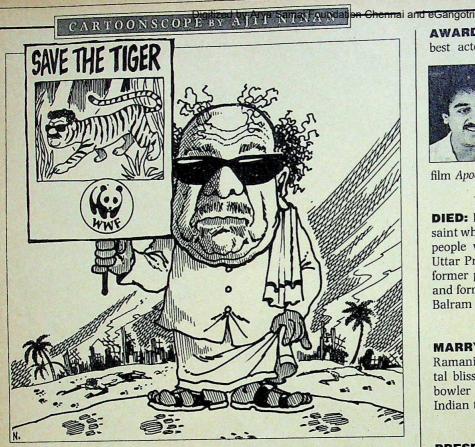
just acquired additional manufacturing facilities. We're opening an R & D centre in Bombay for product and packaging development. Launching Sweekar Refined Sunflower Oil nationally. And moving to an office in a new location in Bombay!

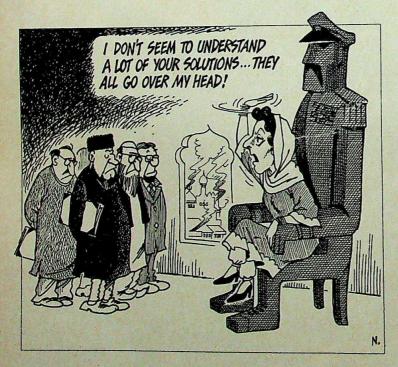
"An entire line of activity will get more prominence now: new products Within the next year, we will be introducing two new products." Mr. Mariwala was tight-lipped about Marico's new product plans "It's likely to be in the range of consumer goods," he said and laughed.

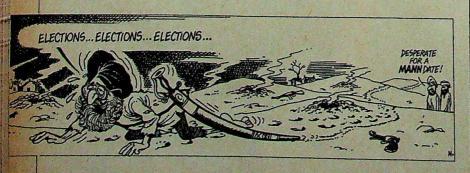
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AWARDED: Kamalahasan, Filmfare's best actor and producer award for



south Indian regional films. The highly talented, and versatile star was adjudged best actor for his role in the Telugu film Indrudu Chandrudu and best producer for the Tamil

An

film Apoorva Sahodarargal.

DIED: Deoraha Baba, the maverick saint who wore no clothes and blessed people with his feet, in Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh. His devotees included former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, and former ministers Buta Singh and Balram Jakhar.

MARRYING: Chetan Sharma and Ramani Ramanathan on July 1. Marital bliss may help the medium-pace bowler make his comeback into the Indian team.

PRESENTED: Arjuna awards, the country's highest honour for excellence in sports, to sprinter Ashwini Nachappa, former hockey captain Mohinder Pal Singh, powerlifter P.K. Yeshodhara, wrestler Rajesh Kumar and swimmer Wilson Cherian.

DIED: Adil Shahryar, 42, of hepatitis. The son of Mohammad Yunus, one



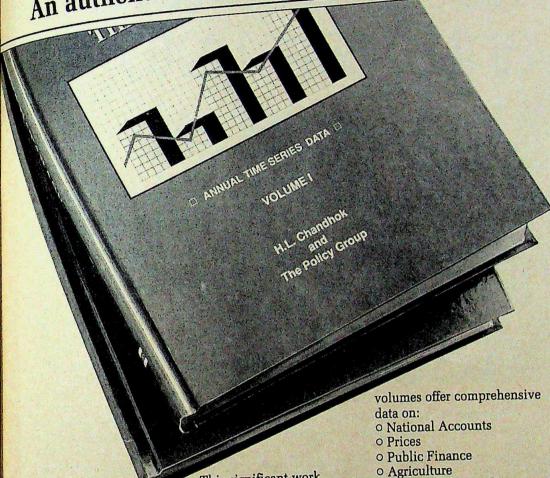
time aide of Mrs Gandhi, was sentenced to a 35-year prison term in 1981 on charges of conspiring to commit mail fraud and blow up a ship. Released through political pres-

sure after four years, he returned to become a successful computer entrepreneur.

ADMITTED: By ULFA, for the first time, responsibility for the killing of industrialist Surendera Paul, head of the Apeejay Group, in Tinsukia on April 9. At a secret rendezvous Siddhartha Phukan, the insurgent group's publicity chief, told mediamen that Paul had been 'executed' for systematically dismissing Assamese employees from his organisation. ULFA has demanded shifting of the head offices of all the tea companies to Assam within this year.

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The two volumes of India Database: The Economy are a consolidated source for instant access to information on various aspects of the Indian economy, spanning a time period of four decades.

This significant work contains annual data on 27,000 series/variables collected from authoritative and official sources. Presented in a consistent and comparable form, it is a statistical profile of the aggregative and sectoral change and progress made under successive Plans. This is an invaluable aid to economists working on macroeconometric models for policy simulation, since the data provided helps build correlates to examine and analyse diverse aspects of the economy. But not just economists, these volumes represent a practical tool for industrialists, policy makers, bankers and the government - in fact, anyone who deals with any aspect of the economy.

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KANISHKA CRASH

### Haunting Tragedy

#### Five years later, a new probe is being launched

TIVE years after Kanishka, Air India's Boeing 747, burst in midair in 1985 and sent 329 people hurtling five miles through space to their deaths, the macabre tragedy still haunts families of the victims.

And the investigation agencies too. Needled by continuing allegations of inefficieny and callousness about a tragedy involving a foreign airline, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) has now decided to reopen the investigations.

Some of the needling has come from the Air India Flight 182 Victims' Association set up by Dr Bal Gupta, 50, of Etobicoke, a Toronto suburb. The association gives the victims' families not just a platform to articulate their grievances with Canadian investigating authorities but also a forum to share grief.

Most of the victims' relatives have, however, resigned themselves to the fact that clues to the crash will remain embedded at the bottom of the ocean. Others like Harbhajan Singh Nijjar, a friend of Satinder Singh Bhinder, the doomed jet's co-pilot, feel the authorities might not be able to prove anything even if they retrieve most of the wreckage.

More than disappointment with the failure of the investigations, what the families find more difficult to get over is grief. Kalyan Harpalani, 45, an aeronautical engineer who lost his two daughters and wife in the tragedy still wakes up with nightmares. "I dream I'm back with my beautiful daughters Rashmi and Deepa again, but then I suddenly awake to reality." he says.

'It's a process of coming to terms with reality and it's not been easy for those who bottled up their pain. But we in this group we feel we have to talk to others with a similar frame of mind, recalls Gupta at his residence in Etobicoke where four other moist-eyed families have gathered to co-ordinate a public ceremony on the fifth anniversary of the crash. Gupta refers to the case of Dr Yogesh Paliwal of Ottawa, who died of a heart attack on June 23, 1988, the third anniversary of the accident.

Board report, which cautiously sup-

The new probe will be done with a submarine which can work at 5,000 metres below sea level.

The crash continues to take a toll of the family members who survived the disaster. Six families have since moved back to India after struggling in vain to adjust to the pressures of North American life. Three of the victims' relatives died of heart attacks after the tragedy.

Others like Satya Kumar Berry, 61, a sales executive, who decided to stay, still find the going tough without the emotional support of their children. "Sharad was only 16," laments Berry, gazing forlornly at a portrait of his bespectacled son that nestles in the crook of his arm. Adds he: "Those

Bodies of the crash victims

the tragedy. My sorrow will go with me

Flight 182 as it crashed in the Irish Sea, west of Cork, Ireland at 7.14 GMT, one

hour away from its refuelling stop in

London. Various theories have been

bandied about, but conclusive evi-

dence as to the cause of the crash is still

awaited. A Canadian Aviation Safety

Berry's sorrow and anger partly stem from the fact that not much is still known about the last few minutes of

to the grave.'

ports the findings of the Kirpal Singh Commission in India, says: "There is considerable circumstantial and other evidence to indicate that the initial event was an explosion occurring in the forward cargo compartment.' Many of the victims' relatives feel that Air India bypassed some of the safety procedures because the flight was running late. But ultimately they feel it's the Canadians who are responsible. Says Berry: "When you put 329 lives at risk by cutting corners it cannot be excused.'

The anger of the bereaved has been further fuelled by what they perceive to be the Government's stone-walling tactics. Says Rama Paul, a nurse, who lost her brother and entire family in the crash: "The Canadian authorities are taking advantage of us because we are a quiet and non-violent community."

Many like Gupta have been demanding a royal commission of inquiry, pointing out there has already been a congressional inquiry into a

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Pan Am crash in Lockerbie, Scotland. Such anguished cries for an inquiry are now being heeded and endorsed by various members of Parliament. An opposition liberal MP, Derek Lee, Scarborough-Rouge representing River in Ontario recently declared: "It is a little sad from the perspective of all the families involved—the case is at the moment unsolved."

However, the RCMP which has already spent Canadian \$80 million in the largest investigation to be ever launched in Canada, says its hands are tied. Says Sergeant Pierre Belanger, the official spokesperson: "The case remains the top priority of the Air India Task Force and just because the police are not at liberty to discuss the investigation, people tend to think nothing has been done." Yet RCMP claims are beginning to sound hollow in the face of repeated bunglings by the force which once even obliterated two crucial tapes in error.

Writes Ian Mulgrew, a Vancouverbased journalist in his book Unholy Terror: "The largest Canadian investigation has produced scant evidence. They still can't prove that a bomb knocked the plane out of the sky." The RCMP's frustration showed when at a party to mark the retirement of an Air India Task Force officer they made crests which carried their insignia over the silhouette of a jumbo jet and below was emblazoned, Project Nightmare.

It is indeed turning out to be one. The RCMP Commissioner Norman Inkster says they plan to visit the site of the tragedy—for the third time—to try and determine once and for all if the crash was caused by a terrorist bomb. The new search will be carried out by a specialised submarine called High Sub 5000 which has the capability to dive 5,000 metres below the ocean surface, something which no submersible has ever done according to an official of the Institute of Ocean Sciences. The last dive did not recover any substantial material-barely 200 kg-but the RCMP believes this one will be a major recovery attempt.

Meanwhile, even as the official investigation has failed to charge anyone, Soft Target, a controversial book written by two Canadian journalists, Zuhair Kashmeri of The Globe and Mail and Brian McAndrew of the Toronto Star, insinuates that Indian government agents blew up Air India Flight 182, to discredit Sikhs and their campaign for Khalistan in India.

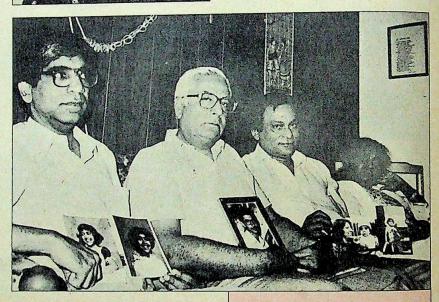
According to the book, Surinder Malik, the Indian consul general in

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri they point out, had visited Malik one week before the crash.

The pulling out of another friend of the Maliks, the owner of a Toronto car dealership, is further cited by the authors as evidence which could not be passed off as mere coincidence. Predictably, the Indian High Commission in Ottawa has dismissed these charges as "nothing but unmitigated trash"

The victims' families are not unduly concerned about such allegations. Says Dr Rajinder Singh Sehgal,

RCMP Commissioner Inkster; (below) victims' relatives at Gupta's residence



Toronto was one such officer, and the Indian intelligence group linked to the bombing has been described as the Third Agency. "The Indian Government had created this top-secret organisation in the early 1980s to encourage extremist activities by Sikh radicals in Punjab. The aim was to rally support for the Government throughout the rest of the country. The counter measures it inflicted upon Punjab in reaction to Sikh violence made the Government appear to be acting with strength and leadership." the book says.

The primary evidence the authors cite for backing their outlandish claim relates to Consul General Malik cancelling seats for his wife and daughter on Flight 182. Malik later claimed his daughter had to unexpectedly write examinations so the trip to India was delayed. The authors, however, point to the fact that Sidhartha Singh, the head of North American Affairs for the Ministry of External Affairs, also altered his travel plans to miss the illfated flight at the last minute. Singh,

Most of the victims' relatives now feel that clues to the crash will remain at the bottom of the ocean.

president of the Indo-Canadian Forum and professor in English at Quebec University: "What we really need is a joint investigation by the Canadian. Indian, British and US authorities."

Meanwhile, the bereaved families still make their annual pilgrimage to a memorial in Ottawa built at the cost of Canadian \$85,000 to pay homage to the victims.

All that will remain of the tragedy. it seems, will be memorials like this. And, of course, the agony and the mystery.

-SATINDER BINDRA in Toronto

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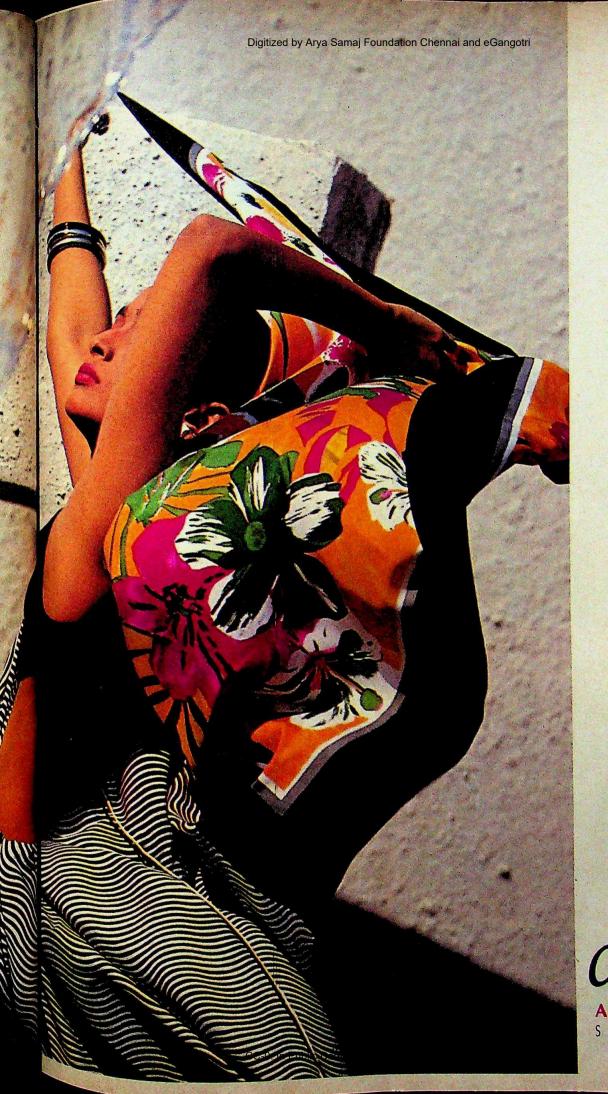
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RAJIV GANDHI

# Comeback Chaos

Lacking a clear strategy, Rajiv's 'Bharat Yatra' has turned out to be more symbolism than substance.

T could have been billed The Empire Strikes Back. For weeks, the demora-Lised and fractious Congress(I) had been gearing itself for the one event that many hoped would revive its sagging political fortunes—Rajiv Gandhi's mass contact crusade. As a strategy, it made sense. The rumblings in the party had started to acquire an ominous tone. Further, it has fared miserably in almost all the by-elections since the Lok Sabha elections (see box). But more important was the symbolism: Rajiv finally coming down from his pedestal, an imperious emperor being transformed into a man of the masses.

As is often the case with Rajiv, the symbolism far outstripped the substance. For one, the strategy was a plagiarisation of Indira Gandhi's comeback bid six months after losing the 1977 general elections. Even the target was the same, Bihar.

The similarities didn't end there. Mrs Gandhi had gone to the remote Harijan village of Belchi riding an elephant to meet victims of mass rape. Moved by her gesture, people gathered around screaming: "Aadhiroti khayenge, Indira ko bolayenge" (We will eat half a roti, but we will bring back Indira).

Rajiv forsook the elephant for an equally symbolic mode of transportthe second class carriage of an ordinary passenger train, the berth above reserved for his suitcase and an icebox. In between, he spent time eating his meals with ordinary party workers, discarding the proffered cutlery and using his fingers instead. As the starting point for his 'Bharat Yatra', he chose Champaran, where another Gandhi (the Mahatma) had launched his first agitation.

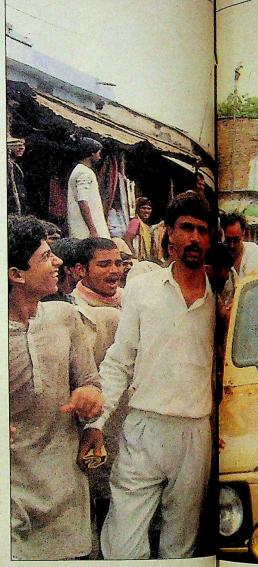
As they did with Mrs Gandhi, the crowds thronged the stations to see Rajiv's head sticking out of the second class compartment. And, lest no one mistake the parallels, they were even tutored to repeat the same slogan: "Aadhi roti khayenge, Rajiv sarkar banayenge" (We will eat half a roti, but we will bring back the Rajiv government).

There, of course, the parallels ended. Mrs Gandhi had successfully projected herself as a leader of simple tastes with genuine sympathy for the masses. With Rajiv, the effort was forced, even farcical. At Shekhpura, for instance, the sole reason for braving the pre-monsoon heat and dust was to rehabilitate Rajo Singh, the co-operative mafia don he himselfhadmarginalised in 1985. At the public meeting, Singh handed Rajiv Rs 1 lakh "on behalf of the people". Rajiv reciprocated by endorsing a proposal to hold the Congress(I) state unit's first political convention since 1954 at Shekhpura. Former Bihar chief minister Bhagwat Iha Azad was not amused: "The whole exercise of the former prime minister seems to have been aimed at rehabilitating Rajo Singh and the like."

Rajiv did, however, drive home the point that he is still the only leader in the Congress(I) with crowd-pulling ability. But that also carries its own cross, as Rajiv discovered. What the 'Bharat Yatra' revealed most clearly was that the fissures in the party have become alarming. Factional feuds erupted in Rajiv's presence all along the route. And group leaders, instead of restraining their supporters, themselves indulged in sharp exchanges with their rivals.

The other problem, of course, is that even with the Indian Railways' efficiency, Rajiv is running way behind schedule. According to the AICC(I)'s programme, he was to have covered seven non-Congress(I) states in 35 days beginning June 7, "to meet ordinary Congressmen, address meetings and have community lunches with party workers". But till June-end he had covered only three states: Tamil Nadu, Bihar and remote Assam. It was not just scheduling that caused the delays. His much publicised Uttar Pradesh trip, for instance, had to be cancelled because of serious disagreements among the state party factions over his tour programme.

Party spokesmen, however, insist that the tour so far has been a resounding success. V.N. Gadgil says Rajiv's mass contact crusade was in response to the collective demand made at the Working Committee meeting in March. General Secretary H.K.L.

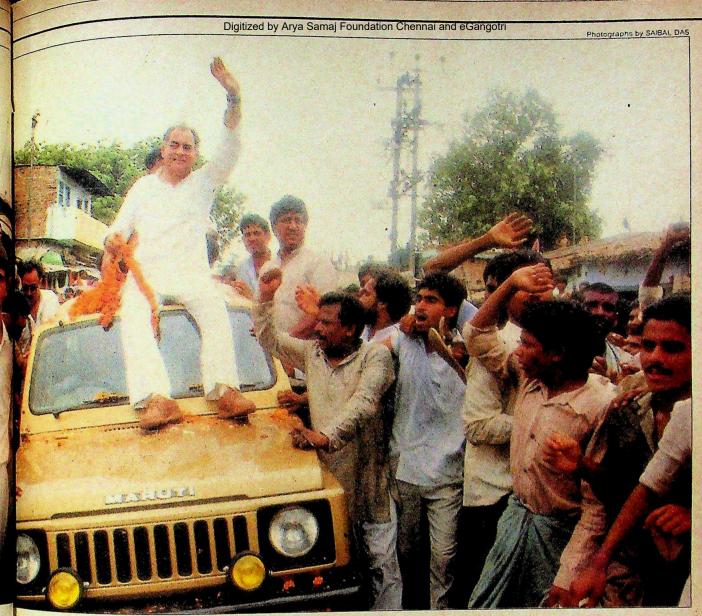


Rajiv in a motorcade; and (right) at a community lunch: trying to cultivate a 'man of the masses' image

Bhagat, with a sycophantic touch of hyperbole, terms his leader's tours as a "mission to awaken the national conscience to the dangers in Kashmir, Punjab and other parts of the country".

But Rajiv's current compulsions are entirely different. After its defeat in the parliamentary elections the Congress() has failed to bounce back in the assembly polls, thus negating a historical trend. The Congress in 1977 and the Opposition in 1980 and 1985, had sulf stantially improved their electoral post tion. The Congress(I)'s failure to follow suit has raised doubts about Rajiv's vote-catching ability.

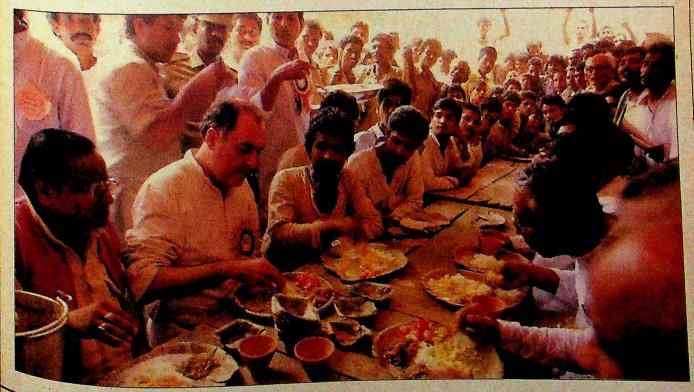
The slew of ginger groups that had come into being at the state and nation level is another sign that all is not we in Rajiv's heaven. Jagannath Mishra Bihar Vikas Manch has now been



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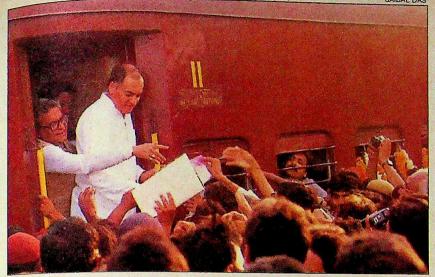


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BY-ELECTIONS

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#### **Poor Show**

F the Congress(I) is hitting the come-back trail, the hustings show no evidence of it. Since the February 27 assembly elections, 14 assembly and two parliamentary by-polls have taken place. The Congress(I) has been able to win only one—the Lahaul-Spiti constituency in Himachal Pradesh.

Meanwhile, the BJP has further undermined the traditional Congress(I) stronghold of Himachal Pradesh's tribal belt by wresting two reserved seats—Kinnaur and Bharmour.

By-elections are regarded as significant indicators of political trends. After a major poll debacle, a party traditionally starts regaining lost ground by being favoured in the by-polls. Says BJP President L.K. Advani: "Usually a sympathy fac-

tor works in favour of the party that has lost the general election."

However, this does not seem to have worked for the Congress(I). The BJP has wrested Damoh and Bhatapara assembly seats from the Congress(I) in Madhya Pradesh while the Janata Dal has won in Orissa and Bihar by huge margins.

There is irony in the fact that around the time Rajiv Gandhi was drawing massive crowds in Bihar, the Janata Dal won the Chhapra parliamentary constituency by an impressive margin of over 1.7 lakh votes. In Gopalganj, where the poll had been countermanded earlier, the Congress(I) came a poor third. In the Dhamnagar assembly byelection in Orissa the Janata Dal defeated the Congress(I) by by over 21,000 votes.

All this seems to reinforce the impression that disaffection with the Congress (I) continues despite its come-back efforts.

-BHASKAR ROY

Rajiv at a railway station; (below) Forum for Action meet: open dissent

rivalled by a forum started by his rival, Tariq Anwar. Bansi Lal has recently floated the Haryana Vikas Manch. The launch of a similar manch in Madhya Pradesh by former MP Aslam Sher Khan and AICC(I) Joint-Secretary Dilip Singh Bhuria was stalled by an alarmed Central leadership. Says a party leader: "The forums are an admission of the irrelevance of the party organisation at the local level."

Meanwhile, the Congress Forum for Action (CFA) at the Central level has intensified its activity as a platform of party dissidents. Questioned about the high command's inability to take disciplinary action against any of the forums, Gadgil's only answer is apologetic: "There were forums even in Nehru's time."

But the high command is clearly perturbed. The party Working Committee finally met last fortnight to discuss the issue. Rajiv's perception was that the forums were a challenge to his leadership and senior Working Committee member Margatham Chandrashekhar was authorised to write to the organisers of such forums not to work against the party interests. The Congress(I) Working Committee, in fact, roundly criticised the CFA, but the forum defiantly held another meeting.

Meanwhile, Rajiv has reconstituted the AICC(I), appointing former Lok Sabha Speaker Balram Jakhar as general secretary in charge of organising party polls. Calling his job "a very gigantic task". Jakhar is hopeful that the elections will "end ad hocism in the party and bridge the gulf between the leadership and the workers".

But the party think-tank is in a fix as to the strategy to be adopted for returning to power. One school of thought suggests that the Congress(I) should play its nationalist-secular card to eliminate the BJP's growing clout and drive a wedge between the Janata Dal and the Left. The party's recent convention against communalism was a step in that direction.

Another set of Rajiv's advisers disagrees. They feel the party should play the Hindu card considering the electoral benefit it has brought the BJP. But whichever side prevails, the Congress(I) is clearly running out of the two crucial elements necessary for a come-back—time and an effective enough strategy.

-BHASKAR ROY with FARZAND AHMED

JULY 15, 1990 . INDIA TODAY 79

RIDETHE YAMAHA FAVOURITE

AHEAD OF THE 100'S

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RURAL MARKETS

# The Call of Consumerism

With villagers getting hooked on to a whole range of consumer products, a vast new market has opened up.

ROTAP Roy is senior vice-president, marketing, at Godrej Soaps Ltd. If you walk into his office these days, it's just possible that he'll be quietly muttering to himself: "India lives in its villages." No, Roy is not about to discard his pin-striped suit for a khadi kurta and his executive briefcase for a jhola to walk into India's poor benighted villages, spreading sweetness and light.

If India's villages excite him, it's for quite unGandhian reasons. They represent the hottest new market for his company's soaps—and by far, the fastest growing. The figures are cheering. Rural India buys an unbelievable 60 per cent of the toilet soaps sold in the

country. Even more alluring, while the urban market for soaps is more or less stagnant, the rural market is growing

at a staggering 60 per cent a year. So if Roy says "Jai Kisan" with gusto, he has very good reasons for doing so.

It isn't just soaps that are turning on India's villagers. They're also getting hooked on a whole range of other consumer goods—toothpaste, colour television sets, scooters, washing-machines, fans, refrigerators, sanitaryware, aircoolers, the works.

All at once, a new market has opened up for India's corporate world: Bharat. From remote hamlets in eastern Bihar to the prosperous sugar belt of western Uttar Pradesh, from the wheat fields of Punjab to the rice paddies of Kerala, from marginal farmers to rich landlords, villagers are flocking to buy consumer goods—and buying them with a vengeance.

The numbers tell the story. The rural market for packaged consumer goods



BOOMING RURAL MARKETS SALES (Rs. crore)

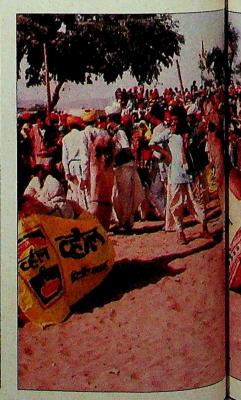
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	TOILETRIES	1984	1988	
9	PREMIUM SOAPS	12,5	42.0	
0	POPULAR SOAPS	144.0	300.0	
<b>P</b>	SHAMPOOS	0.9	2.6	
	SHAVING CREAMS	0.3	0.7	
	TOOTHPASTE	15. 5	42.5	
	SAFETY RAZOR BLADES	18.0	42.0	
	COSMETICS	22.0	66.5	

It's a myth that cheaper products sell in rural markets."

VINOD DHAWAN
Vice-President, Cadbury's

"What we are now seeing is the rural middle class boom."

SUMIT ROY Head, Lintas' rural unit



Charley B.K. SHARMA

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crossed Rs 1,500 crore in 1988, more than double the figure five years before. Over 20 per cent of colour televisions produced in the country are sold in rural areas. As are 48 per cent of monocassette players and 48 per cent of mopeds. The list is endless (see chart).

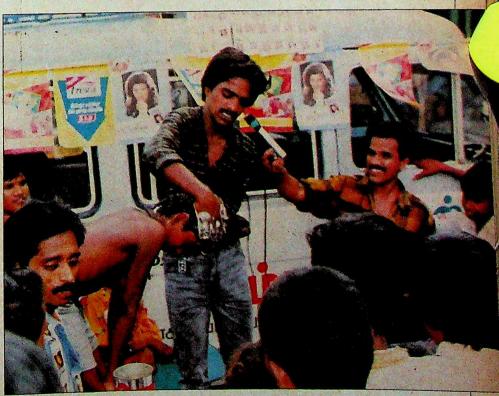
XPECTEDLY, companies are rushing to grab a piece of the pie, setting up special divisions to cater to the new market and designing products specially for rural areas. Cadbury's, for instance, is developing chocolates that won't melt easily in the heat. And LML Ltd recently introduced a scooter with a more powerful engine-aimed at the farmer, who can use it for transporting goods. Says P.B. Bharda, vice-president (sales and marketing) of soap manufacturer Tata Oil Mills Company Ltd (томсо): "We realised that if we needed to jack up our sales there was no alternative but to go rural. The competition in the urban market is too hot.'

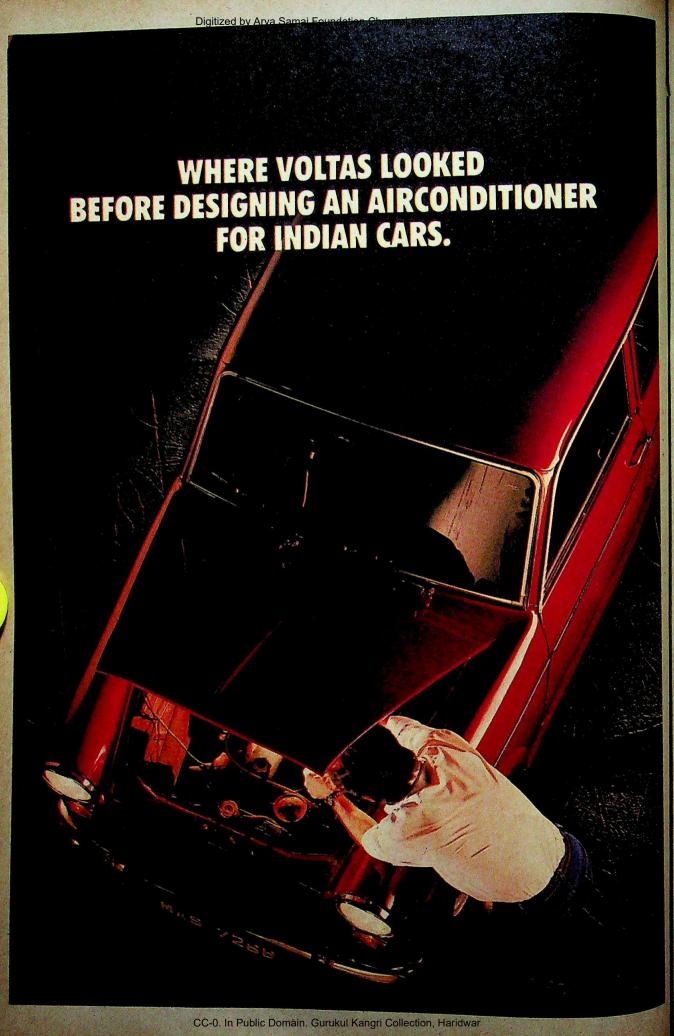
Advertising agencies like Lintas, Clarion and Ulka are cashing in on the boom by setting up separate rural advertising cells. Says Sumit Roy head of Lintas' rural marketing unit: "After the middle class urban consumer boom. what we are seeing today is the rural middle class boom. It had to happen."

With hindsight, it's obvious it had to. The Green Revolution, which was once

(Clockwise from below) Demonstration of shampoo use; Wheel banners on camels; soaps being sold by the roadside







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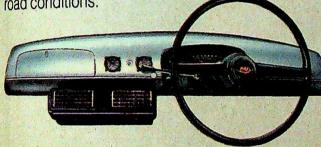
The experts at Voltas' nighty sophisticated R&E centre looked under the bonnets of Indian cars. Studied the engines. And then using computer-aided design and manufacturing, developed their airconditioner.

So, for the first time in India, there's an airconditioner developed specifically to suit the engines of Indian cars.

More important, the engineers at Voltas'
Airconditioning and Refrigeration Research Centre
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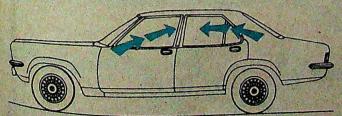
So, they're equipped with superbly rugged 'swash plate' compressors. They use 5 pistons, to cut down on engine strain and increase fuel economy.

Further the refrigerant system of Voltas airconditioners is sized optimally and tailored for each make of car, ensuring efficient cooling.

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cools the entire car, uniformly. This is done by a single compressor system with two cooling units, one in the front and one at the back. Which for once keeps the passengers as cool as the drivers. And puts the luxury back in luxury cars.

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restricted to a few pockets, has spread all over the country. And with the Government ensuring that agricultural prices don't crash, the farmer has money to spend—all of it tax-free. One statistic is revealing of the surplus money that farmers now have in their pockets: in 1960, the average rural household spent 81 per cent of its income on food; today it spends less than 70 per cent.

The consequent splurge effect is visible all over the country. In Shamli, a mandi market in the heart of western Uttar Pradesh's sugar belt, Neeraj Goel finds buyers even for the washing-machines that his shop stocks. Television sets are, of course, passe. Says Goel: "I sell 60 sets every month, and the demand swells during the festival and marriage season."

In Perunna village near Changanacherry town in Kerala, Babu Alex has a shop selling swanky sanitaryware. Some taps cost more than Rs 3,000, but that hasn't kept customers away. Business is thriving and Alex now has a computer to aid him in speedy and accurate billing. In Jaridih village in Bihar's Dhanbad district, a paan shop displays thermos flasks of a myriad brands. The shopowner says he sells a dozen flasks every day. It's hard to

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri ad all believe, until the shopkeeper explains

that many families have as many as six members working in the mines.

Television, with its alluring commercials, has, of course, contributed in large measure to the splurge. To see how well it has succeeded, move to Andhra Pradesh, to the house of M. Venkateswarlu, a small-time paddy farmer in Guntur district. Among his prized possessions is a television set.

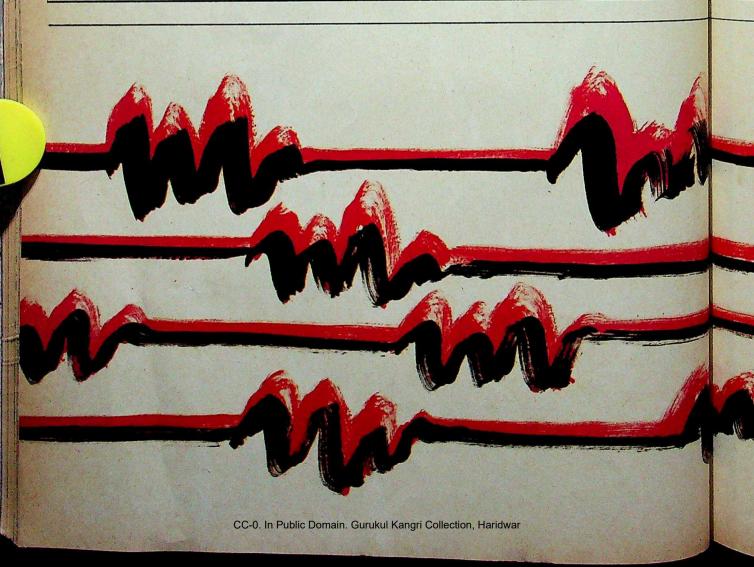
HE change it has wrought is evident. Inspired by the beautiful women who daily sing the praises oftoiletsoap, Venkateswarlu's sons now use Lux. For washing clothes, the family has taken to Rin-the commercials imply you can't do without it. The pearly white teeth of the models in the toothpaste advertisements too have taken their toll: after a long debate, the family abandoned charcoal for Colgate.

It's a long way from Guntur to Asagarh, an adivasi village on the Bombay-Ahmedabad highway. But as far as the effect of television goes, its inhabitants might be part of Venkateswarlu's family. Asagarh's thousand residents make a living cultivating wheat or working on the local chickoo farms. A decade ago, mention of washing soaps

or chocolates might have evoked blank stares. Today, reputed soap brands vie with each other for a place in the adivasis' toiletry. Potato chips are in high demand. And some adivasis will smoke only a Wills cigarette. Says Nissar

Khan, a change plaints, he sells

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PRASHANT PANJIA Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennal and eGangotri

Khan, a shopkeeper: "Television has changed our lives." Nissar has no complaints, of course. Business is booming: he sells a dozen cakes of soap every day.

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But marketing in rural areas—as companies are discovering—entails

Bicycle on display at a Meerut mela

more than just beaming slick commercials. Says S.K. Wadhwa, executive director of sewing machine manufacturer Usha International: "Their reach is limited. You have to create excitement so that villagers remember your product." Usha's solution was to run sewing schools in villages which offer short-term tailoring courses for women.

THER companies have been equally innovative. Brooke Bond adopts tea stalls which tempt villagers to sample its product by offering free cups of tea. Geoffrey Manners participates in village melas where its salesmen, dressed in white aprons to resemble doctors, extol the virtues of Anacin. In Andhra Pradesh, Philips dresses up people to look like its bulbs and batteries and parades them through the village.

All this is a far cry from the antiquated marketing methods of the past, when companies used to have a few big stockists and catered to expanding markets by increasing their number. The strategy worked. But only up to a point—it made no sense to have a stockist in a village with a population of 1,000 where the demand for a certain

CC-0. In Pullipper In Meule Grant Aridwar

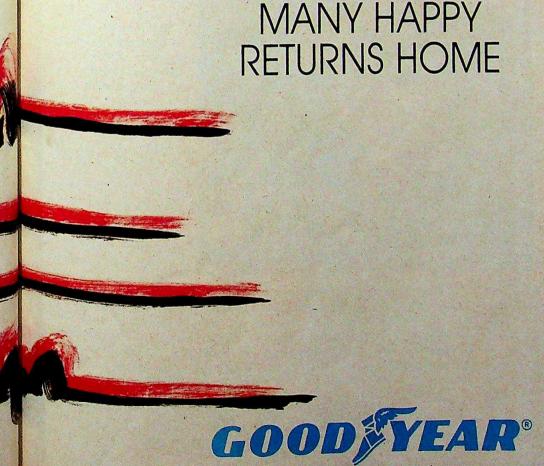
product would be a dozen units a day.

Hindustan Lever's answer is to use a fleet of vans which regularly visit remote villages with a population of less than 5,000 at regular intervals to restock small shops with its primary products—Lifebuoy and Wheel soap. The strategy is called Operation Harvest. Says Sidharth Sen, marketing director (detergents): "We are just tapping the rural market. There is a lot to learn."

Colgate Palmolive has supply vans which offer free samples and screen video films on oral hygiene. These are supplemented by bicycle vendors who go to villages where the vans can't reach.

The Delhi-based Jain Studios and the Dalmias have a fleet of video vans which screen films and Chitrahaar in villages. Space on the vans and video-time is available for hire and companies are flocking to take advantage.

In their rural marketing drive, companies have come up against several problems. For one, the rural market is not a homogeneous one. LML found that the south was more receptive to its scooters than the north. Says Marketing Manager Rakesh Jayal: "People in the south are more willing to accept a high-tech product than the north. They're more brand-conscious, more



Home is where the heartbeat is. And that's why, at Goodyear, making tyres that can take you home safely is the heart of the matter. Every year, Goodyear International invests more than \$300 million on R&D. So that the Goodyear tyres on your car can deliver better performance and increased mileage. And,



bring the smile of relief to your dear ones' faces when your car gets home.



educated." Geoffrey Manners found that its van operations in the south were more economical. Reason: villages in the north were dispersed.

The surprises never cease. As Pratap Roy of Godrej will tell you. A couple of months ago, Roy travelled with his company's van to Islampur, a remote village in Maharashtra. After the usual hoopla—music, announcements of free gifts-the van made its way to the few shops in the village. There was a surprise in store for him: every shopkeeper wanted to lay his hands on all the bottles of hair dye he had. Soon he also discovered that farmers didn't want the dye for themselves. They were using it to colour their cattle to make them look younger and healthier.

Union Carbide found that its slick plastic torches, which were all the rage in the metros, had no takers in the villages. Farmers preferred heavy brass torches. Says Union Carbide Managing Director V.P. Gokhale: "With the brass torches, they feel they are getting value for money."

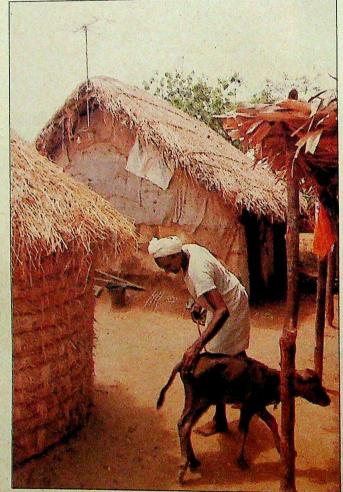
Other companies are modifying their products to suit rural tastes. Texla drew a blank with its television sets with grey and black cabinets: farmers had no use for sombre urban shades. It introduced a new range—in bright red and yellow. Now farmers are grabbing all they can get.

Yet other companies have tried to anticipate rural tastes and push their wares accordingly. Dabur distributes religious texts like the Hanumanchalisa and Ramcharitmanas or calendars with religious themes along with its ayurvedic products. "It works wonders in the vil-

lages of India," says S. Ramachandran, general manager, marketing. The strategy also worked for Texla, which cashed in on the popularity of the Mahabharat serial by naming its sets Arjun and Yuvraj. Radio manufacturer Murphy discovered that the name Murphy Munna went down well with rural consumers,

One company which succeeded in targeting the same product at different





Advertisement on wheels; and (left) a TV antenna on a thatched hut: tuning in

that retailers in villages were cutting its large 100-gm soap into smaller pieces and selling these. So it introduced a small 75-gm soap. Now, it is planning to sell Wheel detergent powder in sachets. It has encouraging precedents: Godrej's Re 1 shampoo sachet has been a runaway success.

That, of course. doesn't mean that only cheap brands sell in rural markets. Usha found that sales of its economy models were falling sharply in rural areas. Farmers prefer Usha's premier 'Century' brand, though it is priced 20 per cent higher. Says Vinod Dhawan. vice-president of Cadbury's: "It is a myth that cheaper products sell in rural markets. The rural consumer is ready to pay for quality products."

And bent on getting every paisa's worth too.

For Lalitaji of the Surf advertisement now has her rural counterpart. Only, not one, but many. And each with a different taste. There's Lalitabai in Maharashtra, Lalitaben in Gujarat, Lalitabehn in the north, Lalitabon in West Bengal, and, in the south, Lalitamma. It's for her family's pocket that companies will now have to fight.

—SURAJEET DAS GUPTA and

RAMESH MENON with bureau reports

markets simply by changing the packaging is the West Bengal-based KMP Oils. In Muslim-dominated Uttar Pradesh, the company's hair oil is sold in green packs. In Orissa, the same packs come in purple—the colour is considered auspicious in the state.

Another effective corporate strategy has been to sell products in smaller packs to suit, presumably smaller, rural pockets. Hindustan Lever found

#### CAREERS WITH ITC

#### Corporate Chief Safety Officer

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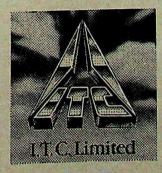
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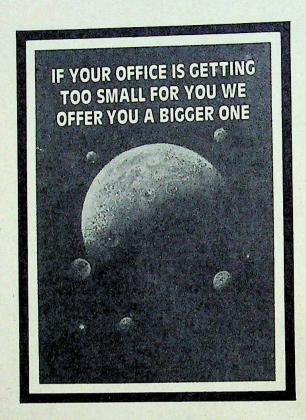
Applications will be treated in confidence and should be addressed to the Corporate Personnel Manager, I.T.C. Limited, Virginia House, 37 Chowringhee, Calcutta 700 071, with the envelope marked 'C.S.O.'



#### New horizons

#### New hopes

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#### CURTAINS FOR DEPARTMENT OF BANKING?

RIME Minister V.P. Singh is a great votary of small government. When he was finance minister in 1985 and 1986, he had mooted a proposal to completely do away with the Department of Banking in the ministry of finance. The move was predictably opposed by many North Block bureaucrats who argued thus: the Government is the owner of the most of the country's banks and hence, officials would have to represent the Government's interests on banks' boards of directors. All of which meant that the department had to stay. But Singh argued otherwise. He felt that the banks' bank or the central bank, that is, the Reserve Bank of India (which is also government owned) could look after the Government's interest in banks quite well. And now that Singh is at the helm his proposal to eliminate the Banking Department—which had been shelved—has been revived. But there's a catch here. What happens to the officials once the department itself goes? India could perhaps follow Brazil's example and set up a department for de-bureaucratisation and accommodate the Banking Department's mandarins in the new set-up.

#### CREDIT CARD TO COMPUTERS

AVING recently hived off its credit card business to Citibank, Diners Business Services (DBS) is not letting the grass grow under its feet. If the company's plans fructify on schedule, it will be training computer personnel in the next few months. Company sources add that DBS' foray into computers, which will include training in management systems, will start first in Bombay and then spread to five other cities. Having installed computer hardware worth some Rs 2 crore already, the company is going to invest twice the amount on this expansion-cumdiversification programme.

#### A CRUNCHY DEAL

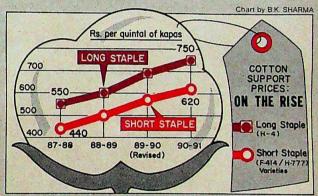
NE of the world's best-known manufacturers of chocolate, the Switzerland-based Jacob Suchard's group—producers of the Toblerone brand—is planning to set up shop in India in collaboration with an NRI Indian business family. The NRI partner in the proposed joint venture is the Varkey group which runs a large number of educational institutions in Dubai. There's a hitch, however. Jacob Suchard's already has a tie-up with Dr Writer's of Bombay which is naturally unhappy that its apron-strings with the Swiss chocolate bigwig may get severed. But the Varkey group is confident that its chocolate unit will come up at an undisclosed location in south India sometime next year.

#### VENTURESOME FIRM

N a major diversification move, the Bombay-based merchant banking company Creditcapital Finance Corporation (cFC) has tied up with British Technology Group, said to be the world's largest technology transfer organisation owning more than 7,000 international patents. If the proposed joint venture company is cleared by the authorities, it will give Indian firms access to a wide range of modern technologies. For CFC, the country's first private venture capital company to have floated a public capital issue in Europe in Swiss francs, this is only one among a number of firsts. It also happens to be the only Indian company to have been appointed by the Asian Development Bank to study capital markets in the emerging economies of the Third World.

#### **COTTON GROWTH**

OLLOWING the hike in the procurement prices of wheat, rice and a host of other agricultural products, the decision to increase the support prices of raw cotton was announced last fortnight. The rise over the last two years works out to a substantial 36 to 40 per cent for most common varieties of raw cotton (see chart). All



this is, of course, good news for farmers. But for millowners it's not. Still, the country as a whole may benefit if there is another bumper crop this year following last year's record output of 125 lakh bales. For this will lead to higher exports. Last year, raw cotton exports peaked at around Rs 250 crore, nine times higher than the previous year's figure of Rs 28 crore. The question is whether the export growth can be maintained.

#### PIPELINE PIPEDREAM

VER since he assumed charge, Union Petroleum Minister M.S. Gurupadaswamy has expressed a keen desire to sanction a natural gas pipeline which will run from Bombay High through the four southern states like the Rs 1,700-crore Hazira-Bijaipur-Jagdishpur pipeline. Especially since Bombay High gas valued at some Rs 1,800 crore is flared every year for want of a transportation network. Now the Petroleum Ministry has estimated that it will cost no less than Rs 1,200 crore to construct facilities to move the gas from off-shore sites to a land-based location from where the proposed pipeline could begin. Given the resource crunch prevailing, one hope's Gurupadaswamy's grandiose plans don't end up as a pipedream.

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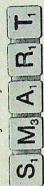
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#### ECONOMY Left, Right, Left...

#### The Government moves back and forth on policies

7 HEN the National Front Government came to power seven months ago, the initial utterances of its leaders gave the impression that there would be a leftward shift in economic policies. But wait. That shift is yet to materialise. On the contrary, many think the Government is inclined to move more to the right, which is in tune with global trends.

Interestingly, the most trenchant criticism of the Government's new industrial policy has come from the while, the Government is drawing up a list of industries where foreign investment will not be welcome.

At the opening of the National Development Council meeting of chief ministers, V.P. Singh emphasised that the time had come for India to look outwards. Otherwise, it would be overtaken by many developing countries of south-east Asia. Bureaucratic controls which "bred corruption, protected existing monopolies and generated delays" would be removed, he claimed.

Two days later, Energy Minister Arif Mohammad Khan announced a series of long-anticipated policy changes encouraging private companies to enter the power sector. The changes aim at ensuring a minimum rate of return to private companies which would generate power.

The next day, Petroleum Minister M.S. Gurupadaswamy called for a drastic cut in petrol consumption. The measures include closure of petrol pumps once a week and requesting the Centre and state governments to cut their petrol consumption by 20 per cent. But it is doubted if government bodies will actually heed such "requests". But Singh doesn't seem worried on this score. "It's important to send a psychological messageevery time someone wants to buy



prime minister's bitter rival in his own party, Chandra Shekhar. A group of economists also issued a statement expressing apprehension that the policy changes would compound the already grave balance of payments problem, instead of alleviating it.

Last fortnight, Chandra Shekhar issued a hard-hitting statement accusing the Government of pandering to multinationals: "Is it a mere coincidence that the industrial policy announcement was made on the last day of the Parliament session to beat the deadline set by the US Government threatening retaliation against India...?" Government spokesmen, however, deny that the policy changes were influenced by the US threat.

"We haven't devised an open-door policy for multinationals," Finance Minister Madhu Dandavate told INDIA TODAY. According to him there's been no let-up in the Government's strategy encouraging self-reliance. Moreover, individual cases of foreign investment and equity participation will be decided "strictly on merit". Mean-

ith different ministers pulling in opposite directions, the signals being sent out are confusing.

And when Orissa Chief Minister Biju Patnaik suggested the rupee be made freely convertible in global currency markets, Singh said he was willing to consider the idea.

At the same time, Singh offered some sops to the Left too. The economy would be decentralised and more employment opportunities created, he promised. He waxed eloquent on the need for quicker land reforms and the need to bring people down from the amiri rekha (line of affluence): "We should consider (imposing) a limit on personal unproductive wealth.'

petrol on a Sunday he will be reminded of the country's foreign exchange crunch," he says.

Still, the Government's functionaries admit that they are yet to formulate a clear strategy to beef up the sagging public sector. This could be on account of the fact that different ministers are pulling in different directions. The upshot: pronouncements move back and forth, from right to left and right again.

But this, government apologists claim, is not such a bad thing, in an 'open" government. Dandavate says that on account of the changes taking place the world over, no longer can one take a rigid view on the distinctions between the public and private sectors.

In any case, such distinctions have been virtually non-existent in India. For the private sector is largely financed by public funds and the public sector is often run as personal fiefdoms of ministers and bureaucrats.

And the latest moves ensure that our mixed economy remains as mixedup as ever.

-PARANJOY GUHA THAKURTA



Hot, sizzling Chicken Nizouri. Take a large chicken and cut into even size pieces. Grind 4 flakes of garlic and one inch piece ginger. Mix and grind to fine paste with 1 tsp cumminseeds, 1 tbsp poppy seeds, 5 cardamons, 7 cloves, 4 Kashmiri chillies, turmeric, coconut and cinnamon. Heat and crush ½ tsp saffron and soak in milk. Heat oil, fry sliced onion, add ground masala, garlic and ginger paste, bay leaves and fry until oil separates from masala. Add chicken and water and cook over slow fire.

When chicken is ready, add coconut water, chillies, coriander leaves, curd and cook for 5 minutes.

#### The cool, smokefree kitchen.

Take 4 tbsp of butter, 3 tsp vanilla essence. Add an ounce of flattery. Massage onto husband's mind.

As he begins to smile, loosen his purse strings. Softly, ask for a Polar Clean Air Exhaust Fan. Which will leave your kitchen fresh, cool and smokefree. Like the Hawa Mahal. Go ahead, try it I What's one great recipe without the

Drive out the stale air. Bring in the smiles.



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#### VIDEOCON

## Sudden Short Circuit

#### The Government cracks down on the group

HEIR rivals contend that they've often been favoured by the powers-that-be, that they've bent rules and had rules bent for them. But on their climb to the top of the country's consumer electronics industry, the Maharashtra-based Dhoot family that controls the Rs 300-crore Videocon group has easily brushed off such criticism.

Last month, however, the unflappable Dhoots were suddenly on the defensive. On June 20, Videocon offices all over the country were raided by the Enforcement Directorate (FERA) and the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence. This came on the heels of two show-cause notices served by the Government on Videocon International Ltd (VIL) alleging it had committed serious irregularities while selling 'subassemblies' of colour television picture tubes, worth Rs 42 crore, to the Soviet Union. The Commerce Ministry also served the company with abeyance order' which effectively prevents VIL, its directors and their associates, from exporting or importing anything in the next six months.

If the charges against VIL are proved correct, the company will have to cough up anything between Rs 2.7 crore and Rs 7.2 crore—apart from possible penalties.

Since 1987, colour picture tubes have been a regular item of export to the Soviet Union. Such exports have been controversial. Most of the tubes are imported from Japan and South Korea and paid for in hard currency, but when they are re-exported to the Soviet Union, India is paid in rupees, resulting in a net 'loss' of foreign exchange. The Government, however, defends such trade arguing that there would in any case be an outgo of foreign exchange if India did not purchase goods like crude oil, fertiliser and metals from the Soviet Union in rupees

and paid for them in hard currency. Still, to ensure that Indian industry benefits, the Government insists that exporters add about 40 per cent value to the picture tubes before exporting them. This is why 'sub-assemblies' not plain tubes are eligible for export.

It was surprising, however, that the Government was allowing compatrading houses as an incentive for undertaking exports. Such licences can be bought and sold in the market.

The March 21 notice purported to place a virtual 'ban' on tube imports: only those with specific licences issued by the Government could import them. Says Chief Controller of Imports and Exports Tejendra Khanna: "Once imports have been removed from the OGL list and 'actual user' conditions imposed, then even holders of additional licences cannot import the item unless they are covered by the transitional agreement."

But additional licences are exactly the route through which the Videocon

group chose to import picture tubes. The route, it seems, also turned out to be an extremely circuitous one.

The company which imported tubes was not VIL. a registered export house, but a sister concern, Shree Dhoot Trading & Agencies Limited, which is not an export house. Venugopal N. Dhoot, managing director of VIL, claims that Shree Dhoot bought additional licences worth some Rs 30 crore from various export and trading houses. He contends that Shree Dhoot had drawn up a contract in mid-1988 for import of 2 lakh tubes from Japan at \$89 (around Rs 1,400) per piece.

What followed pretty complicated. The

tubes whose landed cost including freight was Rs 1,450 a piece, were sold in July last by Shree Dhoot to VIL for Rs 1.328—that is, at a loss of Rs 122 a tube, according to Dhoot. Once VIL exports subassemblies using these tubes to the Soviet Union, it receives export benefits from the Government which work out to a maximum of Rs 158 per subassembly. This amount, claims Dhoot, is then transferred by VIL to Shree Dhoot, enabling it to earn a gross profit of Rs 36 per tube. On June 15, 1988, the two Videocon group companies drew up an agreement with each other to put this convoluted transaction into practice. Venugopal Dhoot signed on behalf of VIL and his younger brother Pradeepkumar on behalf of Shree Dhoot. The agreement seems perfectly legal but it is unclear

#### VIDEOCON



Venugopal (left); and Pradeep Dhoot: under scrutiny

he Government has alleged that Videocon has committed irregularities in exporting subassemblies of colour TV picture tubes.



nies to import picture tubes when there were three indigenous manufacturers-JCT, Samtel and Uptron-which have invested some Rs 470 crore to establish capacity to produce 1.75 million tubes; industry sources claim that demand for tubes is unlikely to exceed that number before 1995.

Two changes in the export-import rules are germane to the Videocon case. On November 4, 1988, all exports of picture tubes were canalised through the public sector ET&T. Then, on March 21 last year, tubes were transferred from the open general licence (ogl) list to the restricted list. Until then, users or manufacturers of television sets could import tubes. So could holders of so-called additional licences, which are issued to export or

why the Videocon group went to such pains to effect such a complicated arrangement. Venugopal claims that if VII. were to both import and export the tubes, it would have had to obtain permission from the Reserve Bank of India. The company wanted to show high value addition by claiming that VII. was paying for the tubes in rupees and not in foreign exchange.

In the process, it seems to have attempted to conceal the relationship between the two firms. On June 15, three days after it was granted permission to export subassemblies, VIL wrote to ET&T: "We may confirm that we are buying colour picture tubes from a local party in Indian rupees. We presume that the party is importing tubes under replenishment or additional licences." What VIL did not mention was that the 'local party' was its own sister concern.

VIL appears to have been favoured in another respect. The company has paid ET&T a commission of only 1 per cent while all other firms which have had to canalise their imports as well as their exports through the organisation, have paid it a commission of 7.5 per cent. The loss of 6.5 per cent commission on a Rs 42-crore deal works out to over Rs 2.7 crore. If VIL is paying 1 per cent commission to ET&T, why are the others paying 7.5 per cent? "They are fools," says Dhoot. His rivals disagree. They contend that the rules of the game were tailored.

That's not all. Dhoot's rivals allege that the 2 lakh tubes purchased by Shree Dhoot were under-invoiced by \$13 per tube. If the allegation is proved correct, the total loss-at current exchange rates—would be around Rs 4.5 crore. The allegation of under-invoicing is being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate (FERA)

An ET&T spokesman, when contacted for his version of the deal, asked for a written questionnaire but declined to furnish replies in writing.

Dhoot dismisses all the allegations against him. He says he understands the laws of the land better than most of his rivals who are only jealous of his entrepreneurial initiatives.

Until now, the Dhoots have managed to wriggle out of many difficult situations. However, this time around, things may turn out to be different. As a bureaucrat quipped: "I must confess that some of our friends in business are smarter than us." But now, following the crackdown, the Videocon success story may start projecting a different picture. —PARANJOY GUHA THAKURTA

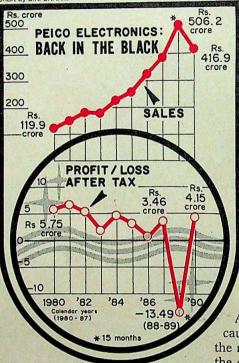
PEICO

#### **Sound Moves**

#### The company reports a profit

NE year ago Peico Electronics and Electricals (associate of Dutch multinational N.V. Philips) was in the dumps. A loss of Rs 16 crore during 1988-89, a threat by its parent company to pull out of India and grim prospects for major divisions like consumer electronics and lighting—it seemed only a matter of time before the company went under.

Last fortnight, however, revealed a



"new improved" Peico. According to preliminary figures for the year ended March 1990, the company has turned in a gross profit of Rs 5.4 crore on sales of Rs416.94 crore. Says Chairman D.N. Ghosh, inducted onto the company's board last year at the insistence of the financial institutions: "The management made all the right moves.' Competitors are sceptical, though. "Let's see the fine-print in the balance sheet," says the chief executive of a rival consumer electronics company.

Pruning the employee rolls—from 9,035 to 8,095—was the most important of Peico's moves during 1989-90. The company had to pay a hefty Rs 5.44 crore to those who quit but its Rs40 crore-plus wage bill is expected to fall substantially. Managing Director Jan Bergvelt says that while Peico's staff strength is just what it was in

1980, sales are four times higher. Observers still feel, however, that Peico is saddled with too large a managerial staff-1,800 against 1,000 in 1980

Peico's Personnel Director V.I. Matthias says co-operation from the unions was a key reason for the scheme's success. The unions disagree. Says one union official: "Workers accepted the scheme because they felt the company had no future.'

To pay for the scheme, Peico hawked over seven of its properties in Bombay. They fetched Rs 9.74 crore But with losses of Rs 16 crore, Peico desperately needed more cash. Parent company N.V. Philips stepped in with a Rs 12-crore loan, interest free for three

years. This and a Rs 10-crore loan from a consortium of banks led by State Bank of India has enabled Peico to reduce its short-term debt from Rs 53 crore to Rs 22 crore.

As part of its re-structuring exercise Peico phased out several losing divisions: home apcomputer pliances, pherals, batteries and the central projects division. According to Bergvelt the company will stick to four "core" divisions, principal among them consumer electronics (which includes audio and video systems) and lighting, which together account for 75 per cent of sales.

The company's lighting division made a strong come-back. After two years of glut, demand caught up with supply last year. But the most profitable product line was the company's audio division which reportedly made a profit of Rs 12 crore.

Those gains may be neutralised by the lacklustre performance of Peico's colour television line at the Rs 30-crore Salt Lake factory near Calcutta. Production last year was a mere 30,000 sets against a capacity of 100,000. To offset the estimated Rs 2.5 crore annual loss, Peico wants to "share" the plant. It says it is talking to several companies, among them, Videocon, Nelco and Crompton Greaves. Bergvell is quick to add that "sharing" should not be interpreted as a "sell-out". "Philips of Holland has a long-term interest in India," he says. "There was a possibility last year of dis-investment but with the improved performance it can be ruled out for now."

That, of course, depends on whether the company can do an en--S.N. VASUKI core this year.

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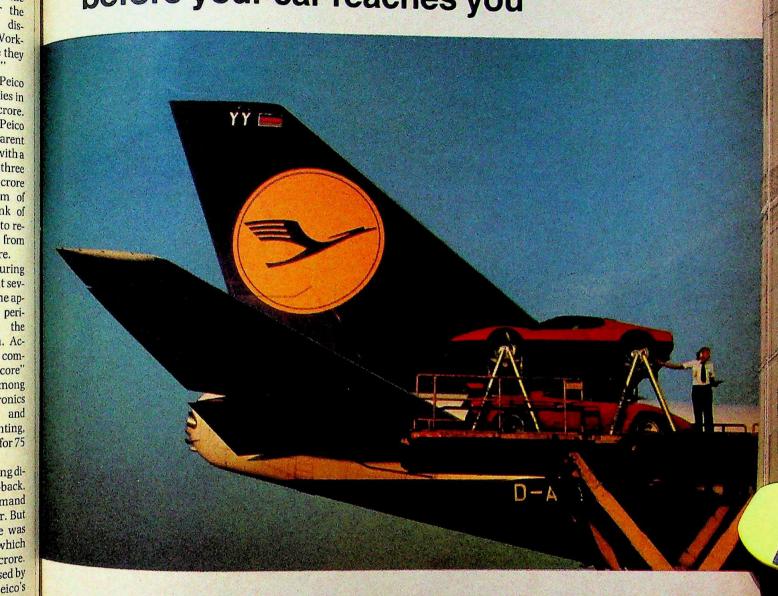
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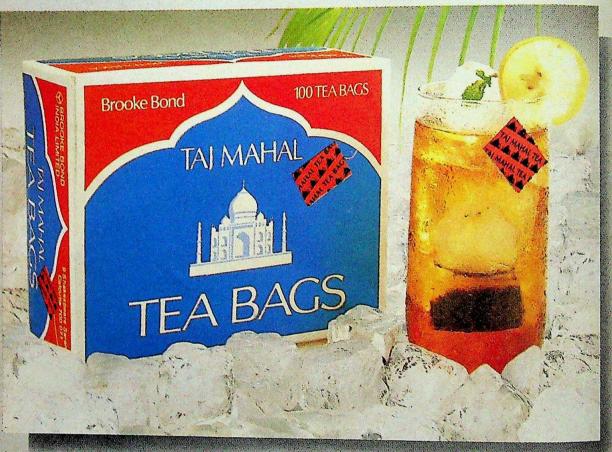
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## Sour Story

## The industry is floundering

7 HEN it hit the Indian soft drinks industry three years ago, tetrabrick packaging seemed headed for sure-fire success. The advantages were many. Unlike bottles, tetrapacks were unbreakable.

They were light and, therefore, easy to transport. And most important, you didn't waste time and money returning them to the manufacturers. Expectedly, rival companies rushed to offer a spectrum of juices, flavoured milk and sova-based drinks in tetrapacks-Parle with Frooti, Amul with lassi and milkshakes, Lipton with Tree Top, Godrej with Great Shakes, and a host of state cooperatives with flavoured milk.

Tetra Pak, the Swedish company that introduced tetrapackaging to India, did brisk business. It set up an Indian subsidiary in 1988 and sold about 70 machines, costing over Rs 1.40 crore apiece. Total investment in tetra-packaging in the country touched Rs 200 crore.

Today, it's clear everyone was chasing a mirage. The expected boom never took place. Many companies have wound up. Those that remain face a tough time. On an average, the industry is able to use only a fifth of its installed capacity. Says Rajmohan Agrawal, managing director of Venkatesh Beverages which has set up

a tetrapack drinks plant near Bhopal: "The market is rather overcrowded. Only the fittest can survive."

That's a classic understatement. For the crunch in the tetrabrick drinks market threatens to crush every player. The worst affected are the milk producers' cooper-

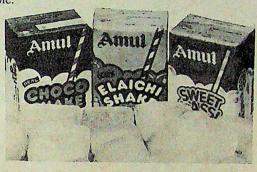
atives in various states. But the big companies haven't done much better. Amul's milkshakes and lassi have fallen far short of expectations. Volfruit's fruit juice and soft drink, despite the backing of Voltas, only appear in summer. Noble Soya, promoted by Godrej, has withdrawn Great Shakes, a soya-based drink.

Lipton, despite its extensive marketing network and the popularity of its Tree Top brand, is in bad shape. The company refuses to disclose figures.

but industry sources say it is incurring losses for the fourth successive year; its Gurgaon plant closed down a few months ago. Still, Lipton is in a happier position than many others. Since it hasn't set up its own packaging plants but hires capacity from others, it can wind

up Tree Top at short notice.

Even market leader Parle's Frooti, despite four years of successful market-



he large number of players and undercutting in prices crippled the infant industry before it could find its feet.

ing-it claims three-fourths of the tetrapack market-is yet to reach the

> break-even stage. Confirms Parle Agro Managing Director Prakash Chauhan: "Although the trend is positive, we have so far been incurring losses on tetrapack brands.'

> What went wrong? The principal reason appears to price. Tetrapackaging may score over bottles on a

variety of factors. But on cost, it falls way behind. Since a bottle can be reused about 20 times, each refill costs about 25 paise. In contrast, a 200 ml

tetrapack costs 80 paise. So tetrapacks never really threatened the supremacy of bottles in the Rs 600-crore soft drinks market.

According to industry sources, the cost of packaging works out to around 34 per cent of the total cost of a



product in a tetrapack. The Madhya Pradesh State Dairy Development Federation. which was the first in the country to market milk in tetrabricks, charges Rs 8 a litre for tetrabrick milk against Rs 5.50 for milk in

conventional packaging. "Still, we lose money on tetrapacks," complains H.P. Chouhan, the federation's mar-

keting manager.

Another reason for the crunch is the large number of players in the market and the consequent undercutting in prices. Though the tetra drinks market has grown considerably-from 2.70 crore litres in 1987 to 6 crore litres last year-it is still only a fraction of installed capacity: 35 crore litres.

Several manufacturers went under because they chose to market milk and soya-based drinks; the expected market did not ma-

terialise. Newcomer Premier Industries, for example, launched soya milk in three flavours from its Rs 5-crore plant in Dewas, Madhya Pradesh. Admits Director Rajesh Agrawal: "We could utilise only 15 per cent of the packaging capacity.'

Bad planning put paid to the efforts of others. For instance, Volfruit had its only plant in Punjab; transporting its product to other regions of the country turned out to be too expensive. Similarly, Pineap-launched by the North East Regional Area Marketing Corporation—had its juice concentrate plant in Tripura while packaging was done in Gujarat and marketing was handled from New Delhi.

Faced with losing operations, many tetrabrick drink companies are being forced to think of ways to use their unutilised capacities. Noble Soya lends the six machines at its Rs 14crore plant near Bhopal to Lipton for contract-filling. It will also shortly launch pureed tomatoes in tetrapacks and is toying with the idea of marketing soya milk in one-litre packs which, ithopes, housewives will find economical enough to buy.

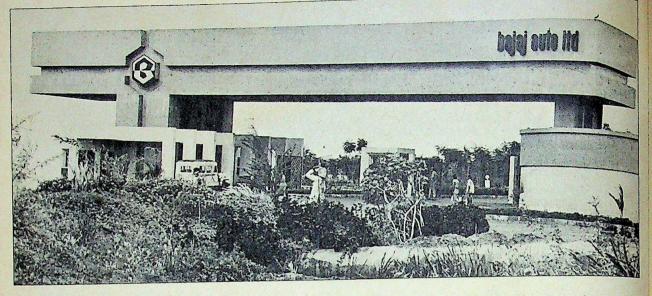
There's been one unadulterated success in tetrapacks-that achieved

> by the National Dairy Development Board. The edible oil marketed by it in tetrapacks has been a great hit with consumers. So though it's been a sour story so far for manufacturers, beverage there's hope still.

> > -N.K. SINGH in Bombay







**AURANGABAD** 

## **Boom Blues**

#### Labour militancy on the rise

IRST the good news. In Aurangabad-known best for the Ajanta and Ellora caves—tourists have been outnumbered by a new breed of travellers; businessmen wishing to invest in the district.

Now for the bad news. Besides

investment and entrepreneurial talent, Aurangabad has also imported some big city vices like labourmanagement tussles that result in violence.

True, the last few years have seen Aurangabadthe unofficial capital of Marathwada—transform into a throbbing industrial area. According to statistics put out by the State

Industrial & Investment Corporation of Maharashtra, over Rs 1,377 crore of investment have flowed into Aurangabad till May 1990, second in the state after Patalganga near Bombay.

But in the wake of the industrial boom have come some ugly labourmanagement disputes. On April 28, Bhupinder Kumar Puri, 41, deputy general manager of moulded luggage manufacturer, Universal Luggage, was gheraoed at the company's Paithan unit in Aurangabad district by over 200 workers-who were protesting the suspension of a union committee member-and attacked with spanners and iron rods. He died in hospital on May 7. Since then, the Paithan unit has been locked out. Earlier in February, the company's unit in Walujalso in Aurangabad district—was locked out after incidents of violence.

Following Puri's murder, the state Government asked the Aurangabad police to invoke the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Actthe first time this is being done in an industrial dispute. The upshot: over 25 workers of Universal Luggage's Paithan unit have been arrested and Bajaj factory: wage battle

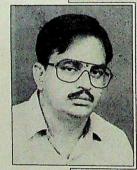
denied bail. And last fortnight, the police advertised a list of 62 workers now classified as "absconders".

According to R.S. Aiyer, Universal Luggage's deputy general manager: "The union leadership is militant, not the labour." But Udhay Bhawalkar, the Aurangabad general secretary of CITU—to which the Universal Luggage union is affiliated—condemns Puri's

murder and says: "crru wasn't involved.'

Whatever the truth. both management and union circles are anxious to play down the Puri murder as they fear a flight of capital. For the

B.K. Puri (left); and his ransacked cabin



**B**oth managements and unions are anxious to play down Puri's murder as they fear a flight of capital.



## WHO'S MARUTI GOING AROUND WITH ?

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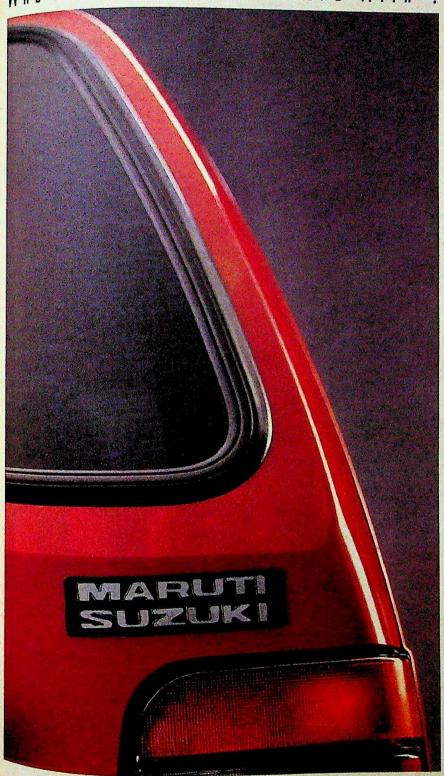
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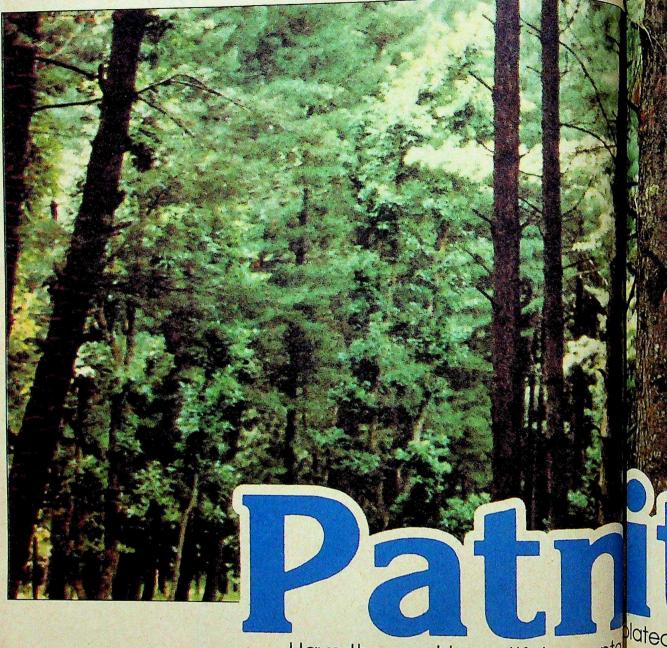
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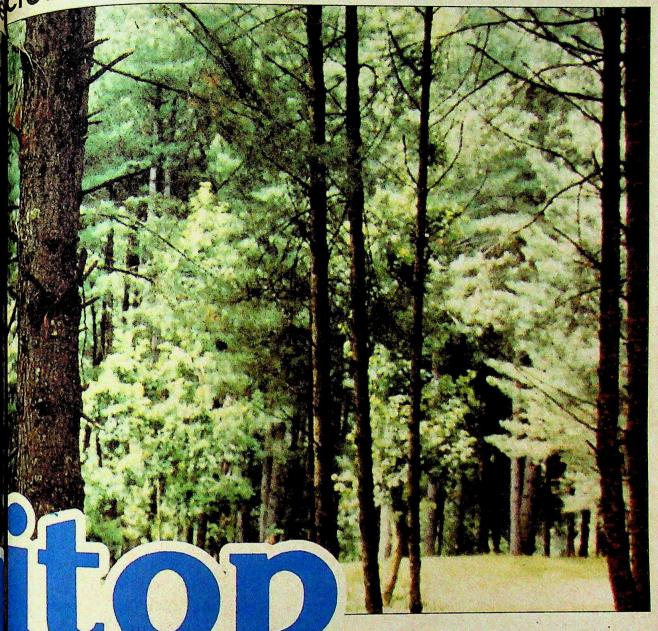
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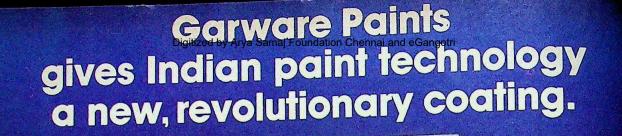
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stakes are high as many of the big boys of industry have set up shop in or mangabad. Bajaj Auto has south Asia's largest two wheeler plant at Waluj which chipped in Rs 423 crore to the company's Rs 1,120-crore sales in 1989-90. Besides, Videocon, Lupin Laboratories, Colgate-Palmolive, Crompton Greaves, Johnson & Johnson and Garware Polyester have units in the district. And last fortnight, Ceat Tyres laid the foundation stone for a Rs 150-crore nylon tyre cord project; Modi Rubber followed with a bhoomi puja for a Rs 20-crore diesel generator project; while senior officials from Mahindra & Mahindra and Siemens India are eyeing Aurangabad as a possible location for future projects.

A natural corollary of industrial growth has been the organisation of labour which in turn has spawned disputes. At Universal Luggage for instance, the protests started over bonus payments. Besides, in February this year there was a 35-day strike at Colgate-Palmolive's Waluj plant. The workers' demands ranged from better canteen facilities to providing permanent jobs for security guards. Earlier, in 1987-88, Bajaj Auto's Waluj division faced a six-month strike as the union demanded wages on par with the company's Pune unit. The Bajaj strike is history now but units hit with labour problems in recent months include Rallis, Jhalani Tools, Jain Spinners and Aurangabad Paper Mills. Says Aiyer: "Unions just want their pound of flesh. But we will not bow down to violence.' Counters Bhawalkar: "We are not asking for charity. Aurangabad-based companies are making a fortune."

And it is precisely because of this that the Shiv Sena backed-Bharatiya Kamgar Sena is battling it out with the more well entrenched unions for a piece of the action. And with more unions entering the fray, worker militancy is unlikely to reduce. Mahesh Narain Singh, the Marathwada region's DIG plays down the problem, saying: "Industrial disputes are part of the game. Violence does take place but the general situation isn't disturbing." Moreshwar Save, the former mayor of Aurangabad and now an independent member of Parliament concurs: 'Aurangabad is Maharashtra's fastest growing industrial area. We will ensure this position is retained."

Such confidence is commendable, but a repeat of the Puri incident could slow down Aurangabad's march into the industrial big league.

-S.N. VASUKI in Aurangabad

#### RURAL WINDOW BY MURAD ALI BAIG

## Lie of the Land

T is easy to see why Etah is a backward district of Uttar Pradesh. Flat, barren, salt-petre encrusted plains interspersed with scrubby cultivation, stretch out to a dusty horizon. There are a few lush farms, though a third of the district is saline. Abhi Lak Singh owns some 900 bighas (180 acres) of fertile land. It has, of course, been broken up officially by the patwari (village record-keeper) to conform

to the Government's socialistic pretences.

"No, it has not been transferred to the names of my friends and relatives" he says angrily. "Do you think I want to spend the rest of my life under litigation? No. I have transferred them to all sorts of different names—cows, buffaloes, dogs. If the laws passed by Lucknow or Delhi had been good laws we'd respect them. Butifanyonethinks we'll tamely part with the land we have cultivated

for generations, they are mistaken. We will fight. I'd like to see anyone snatch our birthright from us."

Most villages are dominated by powerful Thakur or Yadav land-lords. Most lease out large portions of their lands to poor share croppers who cultivate them for a half share of the harvests. So, no one invests much in better seeds or other inputs, and the yields are meagre.

The 1.86 million inhabitants of the district's towns and 1,571 villages are administered by one IAS district commissioner, supported by nearly 500 local officials in the Revenue Department. An equal number are involved with agriculture and rural development. Few stray far from the tehsil or block headquarters-the hub of local politicking and the juggling of rural development loans. They are quite remote to the ordinary villager, except for the local tyranny of the patwaris, thanedars, inspectors and other petty officials.

The police strength is relatively high, as Etah's claim to fame has been the exploits of dreaded dacoits like the late Chhabi Ram. Officially dacoity has been eliminated but little has really changed. Today dacoits work in close cooperation with the powerful landed interests that dominate local politics. Feudal powers effectively rule the petty officials in the police, courts, revenue, utilities and the distribution



Sham Lal (left) with his family: little hope

of rural development funds.

Harijans account for 19 per cent of the population. The Harijans I metat Naglapatti, Danda, Misriand Taharpatti were only vaguely aware of government programmes to help the "poorest of the poor". Sham Lal summed up their feelings: "The beneficiaries for loans are selected by the panchayats, but the panchayats are ruled by the high castes who will not select us. If we get more money, who will work in their fields? They are not fools to cut their own throats."

The Lok Sabha has just passed further legislation to make land reform laws non-justiciable. Most parliamentarians, if not land owners themselves, are dependent on the landed power groups. They will support such social legislation as long as they are confident that they cannot actually be implemented.

THE MARKETS

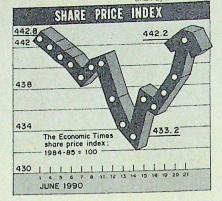
## **Upbeat Mood**

#### After a slide, a sudden boom

THE onset of the monsoons saw India's capital markets in a mercurial mood. Just when gloomy clouds hovered over investor sentiments, there was a fresh cloudburst of euphoria. Share market indices collapsed before zooming, sending bears scurrying for cover.

When a spokesman of the country's biggest player in the markets, the Unit Trust of India claimed in a press interview that the organisation had established 'total control' over the capital markets, cynical observers sniggered. And the downslide in share values seemed to confirm some of their worst suspicions.

But this was rather surprising. Especially since the corporate sector was receiving the 'right' kind of messages from the capital. Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh called for doing away with bureaucratic controls at the National Development Council meeting. Industry Minister Ajit Singh an-



nounced further liberalisation in the industrial policy. War noises were muted and Kashmir seemed less angry than before. Still the mood in the markets was downbeat.

The Economic Times (ET) all-India share index plunged from its May 29 peak of 449.4 to 433.2 on June 14. The national index of the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) reacted likewise: coming down from 437.19 to 420.05 during this period. The 30-scrips BSE sensitive index-true to its namezigzagged violently. Not just once, but thrice it tried to hit its end-May peak but failed each time.

Then, within no time at all, there was a metamorphosis in the mood. The

1990

HIGH LOW CLOSE

ET index shot up to 442.2 on June 21 within striking range of its peak. And the BSE index picked up almost eight points in the course of a week. As for the sensitive index, it really bounced from 781.66 on June 13 to a new high of 819.30 eight days later before closing the fortnight at 814.72.

Many reasons were forwarded to explain the turnaround. First, the two high-flying scrips of Reliance and Larsen & Toubro (L&T)-after languishing for months following the Government's tough line against the Ambanis-staged come-backs. Reliance gained 10 per cent in the course of a day: from Rs 63.50 on June 21 to Rs 70 the next day. And L&T gained Rs 4 to touch Rs 75.50.

The creditable results announced by TELCO caused good cheer all around. And bulls were buoyant in expectation of announcements of improved financial performance by a host of bluechips including Tata Steel, Associated Cement, Bombay Dyeing, Grasim and Gujarat State Fertiliser.

Following a bumpy ride in recent weeks and with the rains cooling temperatures, investors are wondering whether favourable winds will continue to blow.

#### ACTIVE STOCKS

ACTIVE STOCK	S			
				Change in Fortnight
	1990			B.L.
	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	45.5
	THE THE PERSON NAMED IN COLUMN TO TH		21.6.90	01
Ashok Leyland	99.00	69.50	78.50	3.50 -
Associated Cement	508.00	325.00	507.00	18.00 +
Asian Paints	255.00	207.50	231.25	10.00 -
Atlas Copco	48.00	32.25	36.00	0.50 +
Bajaj Auto	477.50	355.00	472.50	12.50 +
Baroda Rayon	910.00	617.50	895.00	8.75 -
Bata India	83.00	62.50	65.00	1.00 -
Ballarpur	172.00	120.00	159.00	5.50
Birla Jute	82.50	50.50	79.00	0.50**
Blow Plast	68.75	34.50	67.50	1.25
Bombay Dyeing	238.50	173.00	237.00	18.50 +
Britannia Ind	119.00	97.00	116.00	1.50 +
Brooke Bond	123.00	91.00	114.00	1.00 +
Cadbury India		133.75	147.50	1.25 -
Century Textiles	3580.00	2420.00	3480.00	45.00 -
Colgate Palmolive		176.25	225.00	5.00**
Cyanamid	123.75	87.50	97.50	10.00 -
DCM	60.00	45.50	47.50	4.25 -
Dunlop	75.50	51.75	58.00	2.50 -
E.I. Hotels	65.25	56.00	59.00	0.50 +
Escorts	101.50	77.75	100.00	4.88 ÷
Finolex Cables	282.50	200.00	215.00	17.50 -
Nestle India	129.00	101.75	115.00	3.76 -
Garware Nylon	69.00	48.00	61.50	2.00 -
G.E. Shipping	54.75	42.50	43.25	3.00 -
G.S.F.C.	218.75	155.00	200.00	2.50 -
Grasim Ind.	134.50	106.00	124.00	1.00 +
Hind. Aluminium	303.75	205.00	273.75	3.75 -
Hind, Ciba	1660.00	960.00	1390.00	nil
Hindustan Lever	125.00	101.00	123.50	4.00 +
Hindustan Motors	37.20	19.80	33.00	0.40 +
Hoechst	2300.00	1295.00	1800.00	170.00 -
ICI India Ltd.	49.50	35.25	36.50	0.50 ~
Indian Organic	63.00	46.50	60.00	1.00 +
Indian Rayon	113.75	84 00	113.25	5.76 ±

		21.0.50	
Indrol247.50	161.25	235.00	11.25 +
Ingersoll-Rand 245.00	190.00	222.50	2.50 +
ITC79.00	48.75	74.75	0.75*4
J.K. Synthetics 67.00	50.00	58.50	1.00 +
Kinetic Engineering . 165 00	130.00	163.00	0.75 -
Kirloskar Cummins90.00	65.00	76.25	3.75 -
KSB Pumps227.50	175.00	180.00	20.00 -
Larsen & Toubro 122.00	57.00	71.50	nil
Lipton112.00	73.00	75.00	10.00 -
LML Ltd. 23.50	15.00	22.00	2.50 +
Madura Coats 122 50	110.50	122.50	4.50 +
M&M 103.00	67.50	86.25	1.25 -
Milk Food 280.00	115.00	130.00	5.00 -
Motor Industries1200 00	780.00	810.00	40.00 -
Mukand Ltd157.00	127.00	133.00	10.00 -
National Organic 1660.00	1070.00	1255.00	65.00 -
Nirlon22.00	13.00	16.00	1.50 +
Orkay Silk Mills20.50	14.50	17.00	0.50 +
Peico Electronics38.00	24.00	38.00	5.25 +
Pfizer113.75	72.50	90.00	nil
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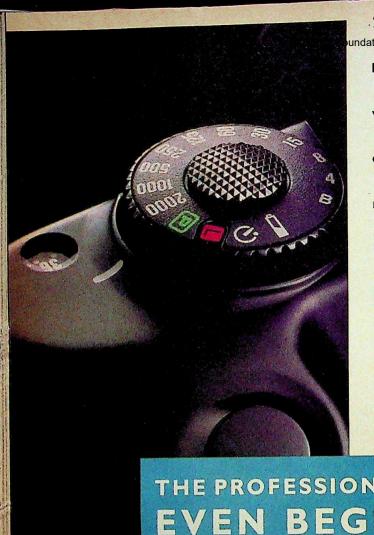
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## Filling a Crucial Gap

## The satellite will improve vital communication links

NDIA'S space programme, despite the occasional breakthrough, has largely been governed by Murphy's Law: anything that can go wrong will go wrong. Satellite launch vehicles have crashed into the sea seconds after take-off; solar arrays have refused to open up; one satellite has even been knocked out by a swinging crane—often it has seemed that nothing could go right.

So at the launch of the Rs 134-crore Insat-1D satellite from Cape Canaveral inthe US, it was only natural that space scientists at the control centre in Hassan in Karnataka kept their fingers

crossed. And kept them that way for 10 days, until Insat-1D was put into its final parking slot, in a geostationary orbit, which means itremains fixed with respect to a point on the earth.

It wasn't just national pride that motivated the anxiety. In fact, there wasn't so much to be proud of—the satellite was built by Ford Aerospace and put into orbit using a Delta rocket of the McDonnel Douglas Corporation. If scientists were so eager

that the launch and subsequent manoeuvres in space go off well, it was because Insat-1D will fulfil a vital function, replacing Insat-1B, which was deployed in 1983 and has already outlived its scheduled seven-year life-span.

Insat-1B's sudden death could have disrupted telecommunications and drastically reduced the area covered by television. For television viewers, the first sign of its demise would have been the absence of the satellite picture in the daily weather reports.

Now, barring an unforeseen calamity, those problems will at least be alleviated. Insat-1D has an extra C-band transponder—13 compared with 12 in the first three satellites. So it will not only take over Insat-1B's functions, it will handle more. For instance, it will enable Karnataka and Orissa to have regional TV networks like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra instead of making do with programmes beamed from Delhi for

two hours every evening. For All India Radio, the successful launch means it can use four more networking centres for its external services. The satellite will also permit the extension of the disaster warning systems in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu to Orissa, West Bengal and Gujarat.

Still, Insat-1D will meet only a part of the country's telecommunication

links throughout the country. But, plagued by glitches, the space programme never managed to have two satellites in space at any given time. And since one satellite could provide only 4,000-odd two-way circuits, the country had to rely on microwave, coaxial and fibre-optic telecommunication links. In recent months, it even had to hire channels from Arabsat and other satellites.

But the services of foreign satellites come costly—Arabsat's 12 transponders were hired at the rate of \$800,000 per transponder per year. Says ISRO Chairman U.R. Rao: "There is no doubt that Insat provides the cheapest mode of communication in India today."

INSAT-1D: SOLAR SAIL-**FUNCTIONS** For the 4.000-odd telecommunications channels. Also provides business subscriber networks, C/S-BAND ANTENNA For beaming TV and radio procommunications. Plus STD for grammes. Also supports dissemination of disaster essages, standard time frequency signals. THRUSTER The Very High Resolu-UHF ANTENNA tion Radiometer will beam half-hourly syno-ptic messages of the SOLAR ARRAY weather. It provides the

needs. Several organisations that are setting up national computer networks—the Oil and Natural Gas Commission, the National Information Centre, the National Thermal Power Corporation, Tata Chemicals, the Gas Authority of India Ltd and Nuclear Power Corporation—need to use Insat's capabilities. Says an official of the Department of Telecommunications, which leases the circuits: "There is a scramble for communication circuits. We need two satellites up there all the time to meet users' demands."

In fact, the original plan of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) at the start of the Insat-1 series was to always have a spare satellite in space to provide telecommunication

Insat-1D at launch: success at last

The Arabsat lease ends in September next year. After that the option is between again hiring the services of foreign satellites and using homemade satellites. But the first of the next satellite series-Insat-II-will take another two years before it is ready for launch. Though it is an experimental satellite, ISRO plans to use it for commercial services. All five satellites in the series are to have twice the capacity of the Insat-1 satellites and if all goes well, the last will be launched before the end of the century. But that part of the ambitious programme is still very much in the air.

-AMARNATH K. MENON

BMW TOURNAMENT

## **Promising Performance**

## India finish fifth, but show flashes of brilliance



TWO victories, three defeats, a draw and fifth position in a field of seven. It is testimony to the depths to which Indian hockey has slipped that even a record as mediocre

as this is seen as a leg-up for the national game. Yet, last fortnight, as the Indian team left the Netherlands after playing in the BMW Trophy at Amstelveen, located on the outskirts of Amsterdam, they had made a point. That despite everything that officialdom, petty politicking, lack of planning and patronage, and even waning popularinterest had done to destroy the sport, India still possessed the talent to regain its original international stature.

For too long have international hockey experts and writers lamented that full-back Pargat Singh could easily be acknowledged as the finest player in world hockey today if he were captaining a slightly better side. At Amstelveen's Wagner Stadium, Pargat, showed his mettle not only by holding the defence together, but also by moving up into attack whenever necessary as his brilliant goal-scoring thrust against Pakistan, resulting in India's 4-2 victory, showed. He also played a stellar role in India's victory against Olympic champions Great Britain—the first on synthetic turf since 1973—and in the fight-back against West Germany that almost levelled the match. But often, he seemed a man too imaginative and motivated for a relatively mediocre Indian side.

There were other flashes of brilliance too. Young Jagbir Singh finally showed signs that he had emerged as the

Pargat Singh in the match against Spain

frontline striker India had needed for long. With six goals Jagbir became top-scorer in the tournament, displa ing opportunism and killer insting qualities Indian strikers have tradition ally lacked. His spectacular lunge th deflected a Vivek Singh free hit in the Spanish goal was the kind of sh Indian supporters normally see happe ing in the Indian striking circle. The was also a welcome return to form left-winger Thoiba who looked danger ous each time he broke free, though sometimes short of ideas after making the break.

The half-line too showed a na sense of purpose with Vivek Singh ma. aging the midfield with imagination What the Indian team lacked most of was strategic thought. For exami against Australia, who were the eve tual winners, India, after being twice the lead, succumbed 3-6, failing to show up their defence in anticipation Australia's counter-attacks. Instea the team got carried away, tried match the Australians' heightenedpa and left gaps in the defence.

The Australian team was the quid est and fittest on show. Said team doct Tom Henbest: "All our forwards an

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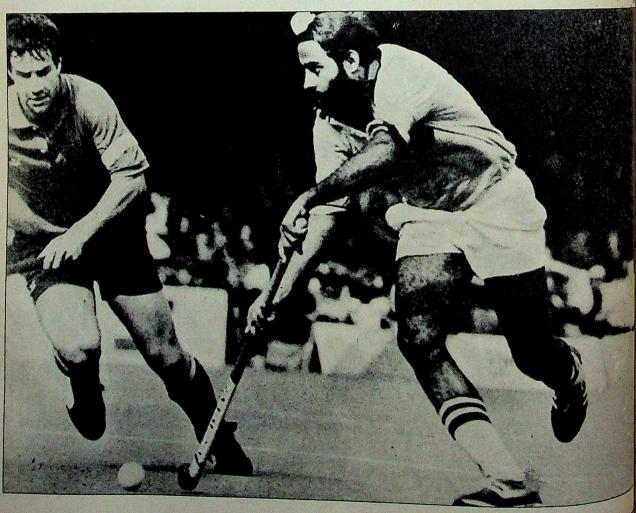
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half-backs can run the 100 metres in half-packs in the under 11.7 seconds." In contrast, the eded for under transhowed weaknesses in both ecame th nt, display physical and mental preparation. Said er instinc pnysical said Hans Jorritsma, the legendary coach of e tradition the Dutch squad, about the Indian team: lunge the "It needs a completely new physical ee hit in finess programme. ind of shi see happe

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Preparation, clearly, is the key. For example, so prepared were champions Australia that team doctor Henbest even brought along his own stretcher. The Indian team, characteristically, presented the other extreme. When they arrived in the Netherlands, lashed by icy-cold winds and rain, the players did not even have any raincoats. Since no Incidental expense had been sanctioned by the Government to take care of such contingencies there was nothing that could be done. There wasn't even money to pay for the team's transport and practice sessions as the organisers were firm about not providing hospitality till a day before the inauguration of the tournament.

It is no wonder then that Indian hockey teams, despite having talented players, cannot deliver anything more than an odd victory. And there will be no decisive recovering from mediocrity unless someone wakes up to the need to run hockey in a more professional manner. Amore systematic and realistic interaction between the Indian Hockey Federation (IHF), the Sports Authority of India and the Sports Ministry is imperative.

The manager of the Indian team, Ghufran-e-Azam, spoke of exchange tours with European countries to improve standards of the game. Azam, who is also the vice-president of IHF and chairman of the selection committee, said: "We will go all out for the gold at Beijing." India has no other choice. A failure to get the gold at Beijing could leopardise India's chances of even qualilying for the Barcelona Olympiad in 1992, forcing it to participate in the pre-Olympic tournament next year.

The countdown for Beijing begins 10w with a three-week physical fitness and skill camp at Lucknow from July 8, to be followed by another five-week camp at Bangalore. Besides the sweet laste of victory against two of the world's top teams, the BMW outing has proved Conclusively that the Indian hockey which has a kernel of talent around which a winning combination can be built with proper motivation, tactical planning and physical training. If that is not done, India will be reduced to the Ignominy of playing in an Olympic qualification tournament.

ANUPAM GHULATI in Amsterdam

## **Foul Play**

#### Shukla, Adityan fight it out



TRUE to Indian sport's form there was more action in the boardrooms of sports bodies last fortnight than in the playgrounds. The Indian Olympic Association

(IOA)—a powerful autonomous body affiliated to the International Olympic notice signed by 17 affiliated federations requisitioning a special general meeting (SGM). The meeting was held in Madras in the presence of A.V. Rohatgi, an observer appointed by the Delhi High Court. It ended in a fiasco as unauthorised people, and later the police, stormed the meeting. Shukla rushed to Delhi with the signatures of 63 of the 113 invited delegates and plonked himself in the office after breaking the locks."The Adityan group had almost destroyed sports and IOA became a dead body," he said. "Signatures don't win elections. Let them hold a secret ballot," said Randhir Singh.

But even as Shukla was savouring



he murky battle for control of the IOA between Shukla and Adityan is likely to continue. Sportsmen can only watch from the sidelines.

Committee (10c) and responsible for coordinating the Olympic sports organisations in the country-was rocked by yet another power struggle as the Janata Dal MP V.C. Shukla outpointed President B.S. Adityan and Secretary-General Randhir Singh in a messy battle.

It all began in October 1987 when Shukla was dislodged from the presidentship without a proper election at a special general assembly, beacuse he had fallen out with the Congress(I). The Adityan-Randhir Singh team which took over got reelected through a secret ballotin November 1988. Shukla waited for his fortunes to change, and struck.

First, on May 27, the Wrestling Federation expressed "concern" at the functioning of the 10A. Then followed a

the glory, Rohatgi recommended the appointment of an administrator and the holding of a secret ballot. "From what I saw I can say that no elections were held in the sgm," his report said.

In addition, the Madras High Court restrained Shukla from holding office and gave him time to file his counter affidavit. Undaunted, however, Shukla is continuing to hold on to the organisation, while fighting a legal battle.

It is in keeping with Indian sport officialdom's callousness that at a time when the 10A has to oversee preparations for the Beijing Asian Gamesbarely two months away-it is involved in a murky political battle. For sports in India there can be little salvation.

-BINOO K. JOHN

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INDIA-NEPAL TIES

## **Timely Thaw**

## Bhattarai's visit puts an end to bitterness



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A few months ago the two neighbours were estranged, disagreeing on everything, from security to trade. But last month, when the new Nepa-

lese Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai came to India on his first

foreign visit after taking over the democratic interim government, all the differences seemed to vanish overnight. Three days of talks set the clock back by 13 months and erased the bitterness between traditional friends.

A beaming Bhattarai who had vowed to quit if he returned without the restoration of the trade-andtransit agreement with India-and V.P. Singh signed the joint communique at a news conference confirming their agreement to restore the "status quo ante" as of April 1, 1989. The communique is to be given the shape of an accord by an elected Nepalese Government later. But for now it meant that all the transit points on the border closed by India would be opened, all trading restrictions lifted and the standby credit facility of Rs 35 crore restored. Nepal agreed to lift the work permit requirement for Indian nationals and committed itself to respecting India's security concerns. That meant requesting the Chinese to withhold the last few consignments of arms

ordered by the previous
Nepalese regime. "This is the beginning of a new era," beamed Bhattarai.

In India the rapprochement met with almost unanimous approval. There was no criticism even from the Congress(I) which had made the "Punishment" of Nepal a strong plank of its activist foreign policy in the neighbourhood. "It is a good thing," said former external affairs minister K. Natwar Singh, but stressed that it was the Rajiv government's action against Nepal that hastened the replacement of monarchy by democracy. The agreement strengthened India's plea in international forums that its liberal approach had eased tensions across the

Bhattarai and Singh: diplomatic coup



India's plea that its liberal approach had eased tensions with neighbours. except Pakistan, was strengthened.

> subcontinent and if Pakistan continued to be an exception it was because of Islamabad's intransigence.

> That the reaction in Nepal was somewhat muted was only to be expected. One reason why Bhattarai and his entourage had repeatedly tried to water down the "security concerns" part of the agreement, was because it could be used by the Opposition and

royalists to incite chauvinistic passions at home. "We told the Indian side, any major concessions and the king will throw them at the people. accusing us of a sell-out," said a member of the Nepalese entourage.

Expectedly then, criticism came from the royalists-as well as the extreme factions of the Left, whose leaders felt they were excluded from the talks despite being partners in Bhattarai's interim government.

Specifically, the mention of "common rivers" in the joint communique raised eyebrows, and, along with the abolition of work permits for Indians, was quoted as an example of Bhattarai

ceding sovereignty to India.

His supporters believe the criticism will vanish once people begin to feel the positive impact of the agreement. It will be some time before goods from India start coming into Nepal and though no one expects prices to go down to the pre-April 1989 levels, the situation will certainly ease.

Some gains of the prime minister's maiden foreign voyage are already visible. For one, the tour was covered extensively by national television-which had so far been like the royal family's home video. And in a largely illiterate nation this had much greater impact than any royal procappointing lamation Bhattarai prime minister. People saw him being saluted by the Royal Nepalese Army at Kathmandu and then answering questions in news conferences. And Bhattarai's savvy, acquired over decades of political struggle, did not go unnoticed. Especially his answer to a rather uneasy question on why the Nepalese Army did not recruit soldiers from the Terai region dominated Indian immigrants.

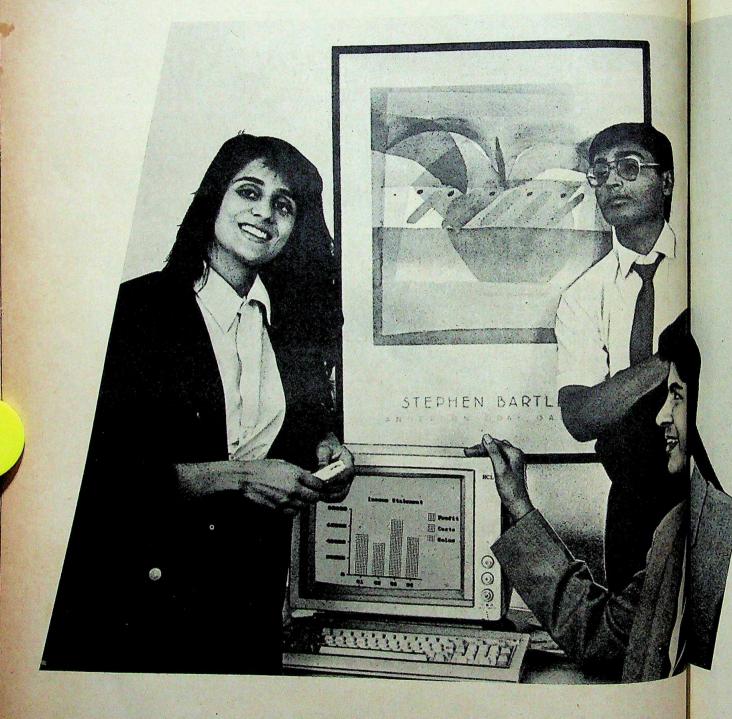
"Why doesn't the Indian Army recruit its men from the Terai rather than Nepal's hills?" he asked.

It was not the reply of an Indian stooge or an India-baiter. It was the reply of a legitimate Nepalese leader who ended his first foreign visit confidently and with plenty to write home about. SHEKHAR GUPTA with

KANAK DIXIT in Kathmandu



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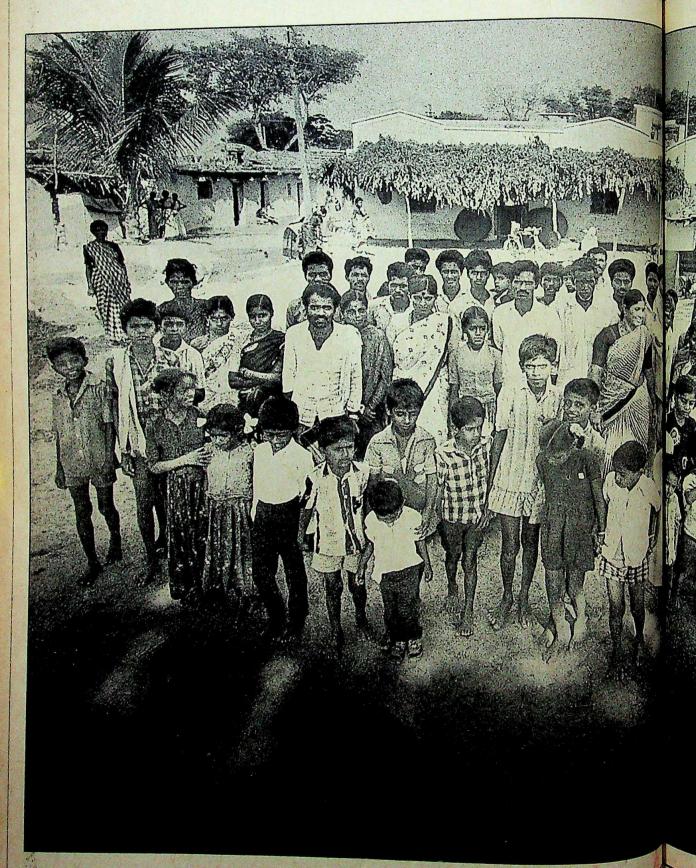


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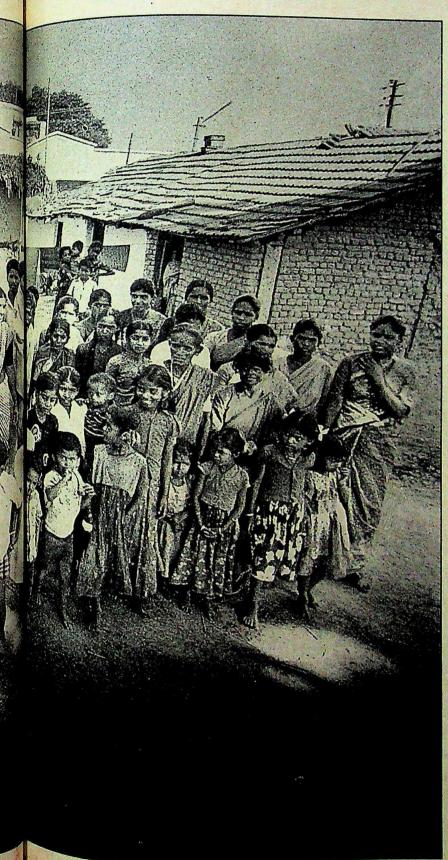
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## THE LAXMAYHAS All in the fa



## Family



T is a dark and dingy room full of suffocating smoke. Five women are hunched over huge handis like in any other kitchen in rural India. But what makes this kitchen different is the staggering quantities of food cooked there every day: 50 kg of rice, 25 kg of ragi. (millet), eight kilogrammes of vegetables and five kilogrammes of pulses, most of it obtained from the family's fields.

No, this is not the cook-house of a commune or a dharamshala. This is the daily kitchen of the 109-member Marapanhalli Laxmayha family in Karnataka's Kolar district—among the last few purely joint families in India. It is certainly among the largest if not the largest. Eighty-five members of this massive family live under a single roof that spans 20 rooms. The other 24 live in the fields next to the house. Renowned sociologist M.N. Srinivas says that "the joint family today is an endangered species". But clearly, this is a rather large exception.

To cater to its size, the family has

A family portrait (left); and patriarch Sonnappa with the youngest member



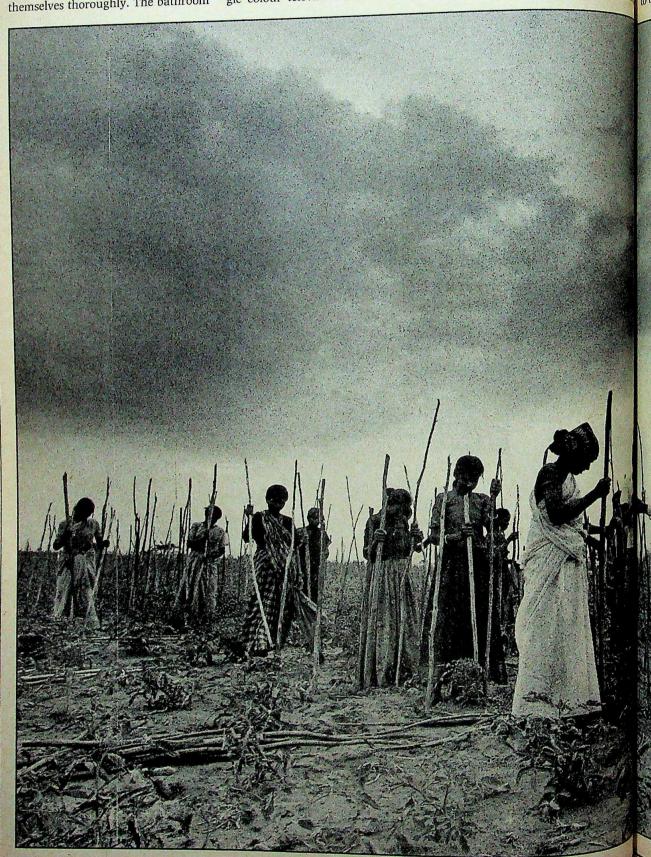
evolved quaint rituals and systems. For instance, early in the morning, around 20 children are herded together and given a mass bath in two batches in the only bathroom in the house by one of the women in the family. The children enjoy themselves thoroughly. The bathroom has a huge cement water tank with a hearth underneath where a fire burns throughout the day.

And by evening, the main house resembles a crowded cinema hall as family members crowd around the single colour television set. Every night

there are about 40 members watch television and when popular serials on, the set is positioned in such a w that all the rest of them can also we sitting in the open terrace.

Once the children leave for scho the women either get down to cooking

cleaning which pro allotted by plains a m can be qu to be in ro



deaning or feeding the silkworms, which provide the family a share of its income. All the household tasks are allotted by rotation every fortnight. Exalso way plains a male family member: "Cooking can be quite a killing job and so it has to be in rotation."

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One advantage of such a large family is that it generates its own labour. There is never any need for servants. For example, in the fields near the family homestead 32 young men and women spend the day plucking weeds from a four-acre patch of tomatoes. None of

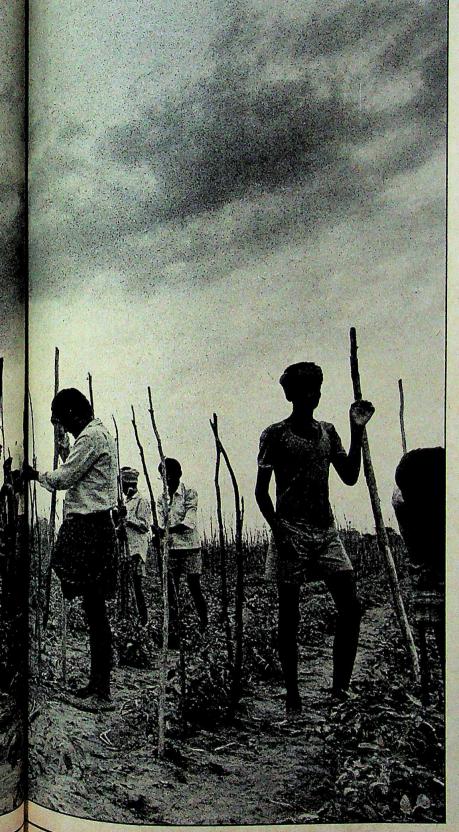
them is paid for the hard work in the sweltering summer heat. But then, nor do they expect any payment. Explains a family member: "Where is there the need for servants? We have so many hands in the house itself to help."

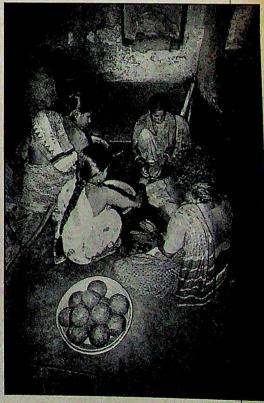
Interestingly, the giant family has a method to its apparent madness. In a family this large, one would have presumed births would be a regular feature. Yet in the last three years there has been only one addition to the family. This is because a conscious decision was taken to go in for strict family planning. Says Narayanswamy, 35, one of the male family members: "We cannot afford to grow any more. It's in our own interest to limit it."

THE Laxmayha family is always a source of wonderment for neighbours, who are amazed how they manage to live together while even nuclear families are ridden with problems of adjustment. Clearly, that is one problem the members of this extended family have learnt to overcome.

For example, when Ratnamma, 28. got married into the family eight years ago, she was flabbergasted. To begin with it was tough just remembering the names of everyone and how they were related. But gradually she grew to like the idea of such an extended family. Says she: "It isn't that there are no family

The family works in the field (left); and women in the kitchen





squabbles. But they are only as serious as the ones in any normal family." Adds Saraswathamma, another family member: "We do not have adjustment problems that we cannot handle."

But aren't such families plagued by

"No." says Chandrasekhar, 32, who along with Narayanswamy, manages home affairs now. But he doesn't explain further.

For all its unity there are some things this family can never do together. For example, go for a holiday. There is so much to manage at home and the field and livestock also have to be look after. Chandrasekhar and Naraya swamy do all the shopping, include the clothes for the womenfolk. The they claim, is a family tradition. cently, they went to Chintamani to

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the typical feuds with mothers-in-law?

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about 10 km away and came back with sares worth Rs 10,000. What happens if some of the women do not like the colours or the designs? In such rare colours, the clothes are returned and new ones bought. They spend around RS 50,000 annually on clothes.

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nfolk. Th

The family is also conscious of the merits of its size. Come elections and its importance is manifest as candidates queue up at its door begging for its 62 votes. Here again, the family operates en bloc. Chandrasekhar and Narayanswamy decide who is going to get the

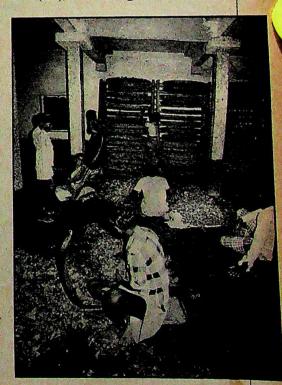
family's votes and announce it.

But pressures of modern existence loom large. The family, which is now six generations old, is not sure how long it'll be able to continue as a single unit. Sonnappa, the patriarch, in his mid-80s, says his only joy left is to see the family live together even as many other joint families splinter into nuclear units right in his village. It was his grandfather, Laxmayha, who built the house the family lives in today. Sonnappa regularly warns his family members that if they ever dare split up, they'd have to face the wrath of the gods. But he himself is not too confident that the joint family will outlive him.

OWEVER, there are several practical considerations, apart from emotional bonds, that keep the family together. For instance, the total land holding, if divided equally, will come to barely half-an-acre each: a fairly uneconomic slice of the family cake. Points out Dr C. Rajagopalan, head of Bangalore University's sociology department: "Earlier being in a joint family held a lot of attraction as there was an enormous amount of property. But with land reforms the scenario changed and so did family interests. Joint families split to sell off property and move to urban areas.'

The need to cohere is also fuelled by the fact that only four members of the family have managed to get into college,

A communal bath for the children (left); and rearing silkworms





and only two hold independent jobs. For the remaining members an independent job is a distant dream, and remaining a part of the joint family, a more attractive proposition.

But as the family wealth increases and more members get educated, the challenge of keeping it together becomes enormous. Cracks have already started appearing on the facade. For instance, Sanjivareddy, 24, and Dyvareddy, 23, who are on the way to becoming graduates, have started looking outside the village as they feel they deserve better opportunities. Sonnappa's 'god's wrattered doesn't shake them. Sanjing or individual reddy plans to post-graduate in science and then go in for academics. He her tantly admits that he wouldn't mill living in a nuclear family as in sobut we will joint family there are few opportunity.



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Sanjin for individuality too realises the The family too realises that it will not in science able to stop Sanjivareddy from movs. He he log out if he gets a job as a lecturer. But, dn't mi obandrasekhar: "We will let him Idn't mix og out if he gets a job as a lecturer. But, idn't mix ogs chandrasekhar: "We will let him as chandrasekhar: "We will send foodgrains from our portunite goldy fields to his house so that the



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Crowding around the TV set (left); and the children leaving for school

lifeline is kept alive." Points out Gopalappa, a villager: "All these years the family stayed together as heads of successive generations maintained a control over the members and did not allow them to split. As they were highly respected, their word was law."

Till five years ago, Sonnappa was the head of the family. And eight years ago the family's annual income was about Rs 15.000 and it was then steeped in poverty. The 56 acres of land that it owned were improperly utilised and the house was in a run-down condition. Then his son Chandrasekhar, and Narayanswamy, the only two graduates in the family, decided to take over the reins.

A dramatic change followed. With some planning they got into tomato cultivation which brought in about Rs 4.8 lakh. They also got into silkworm rearing, netting in another Rs 1.5 lakh. Now, in fact, Narayanswamy declares confidently: "We should be a rich family in another half a dozen years." The improved finances have made it possible for the house to be renovated.

The passage of time is bound to alter all this. With every succeeding year, school going children will ask more and more questions. It is the irony of modernism that education and economic prosperity eventually undermine the survival of every extended family. Soon more and more members of the Laxmayha family will realise the need for individual development, the need for more space to grow. And then even Sonnappa's direst warnings will prove inadequate adhesive.

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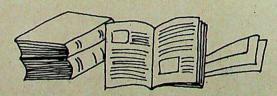
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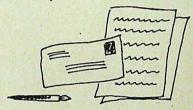


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Seized equipment; and (inset) kingpin Rajendra Singh: major fraud

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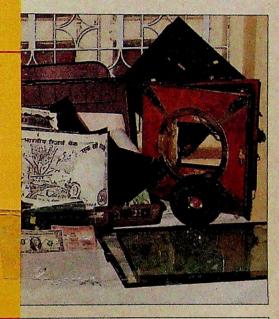
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Master forger Rajendra Singh, a college drop-out who had been labour-

The first counteriest note entered the market in early-1986. His friend Makhou started helping with the marketing, others including Tiwari joined later. With his connections in local banks as a treasury employee and his satta business, Tiwari proved an asset. But he soon became greedy.

Rajendra Singh's share was half of the value of fake notes he gave. Tiwari

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Comments Dongre: "Rajendra Singh was one of the best forgers. What he lacked was organisational skill. The master forger accepts the compliment gracefully. He reportedly told the police: "You have detected only the rejected notes. But the notes approved by me are still in circulation." Fortunately, the forger himself isn't.

-N.K. SINGH in Raipur

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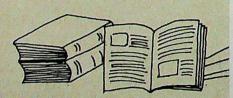
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MADHYA PRADESH

## Money Changers

## Big counterfeit currency racket busted

Raipur treasury, was an active trade union leader, director of Raipur Citizens' Cooperative Bank, and a former member of the Raipur University court. He was also very religious.

Every day he'd visit around 30

temples in the town and generously offer Rs 50. But most of the time he had no change, only notes of Rs 100. The priests would gladly return Rs 50. "Atoning for his sins," they thought. Tiwari was known to earn easy money by political wheeling-dealing and the satta business he ran on the sly.

Last month the real Tiwari stood exposed in what may turn out to be the biggest counterfeit currency racket in the country. Along with five accomplices, Tiwari was arrested by the Raipur police for printing and marketing fake currency notes worth at least Rs 5 crore.

Over the last five years, the gang had pumped into the markets of the Chhattisgarh region, Orissa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Bihar, Goa and Delhi, notes of Rs 100. Besides Tiwari, those arrested include Rajendra Singh, the master printer and lynch-

pin of the racket, his brother Raghuraj Singh, and Makhou, a dentist of Chinese origin.

Apart from the dimensions of the racket, officials are amazed by the near-perfect duplication of the counterfeit notes. Even bank officers at Raipur had a tough time detecting the lorgery. Rajendra Singh boasted to the police: "Such counterfeit notes have hever been produced before and no one will be able to repeat my performance." Admits Raipur's Additional Superintendent of Police N.L. Dongre: "The quality was so good that normally they would never have been caught.

Master forger Rajendra Singh, a college drop-out who had been labouring to discover the art of counterfeiting for eight years, got the crucial clue when in 1985, as part of his experiments with forgery, he put a Rs 100 note in a bucket of water. He discovered the note was made of two pieces of paper pasted together.

This stroke of luck soon paid off. He

and Makhou could share the rest. To cut out Makhou as middleman, Tiwari tried to get the notes directly from Rajendra Singh but failed. Instead, he tried to push unnumbered notes rejected by Rajendra Singh after writing the serial numbers himself by hand. Some of these notes landed up in the pay packet of All India Radio staffers in May and soon the game was up.

According to Rajendra Singh's brother Arvind: "Rajendra bhai did not even have proper clothes." But the

Seized equipment; and (inset) kingpin Rajendra Singh: major fraud



Over the last five years the gang had pumped counterfeit currency worth Rs 5 crore into circulation.

used chocolate wrappers as aluminium foil to make the security thread between the two pieces of paper. The rest was easier. The water mark was made with bleaching powder or acid. He and brother Raghuraj Singh already had a small single colour offset press. Rajendra Singh was in business.

The first counterfeit note entered the market in early-1986. His friend Makhou started helping with the marketing, others including Tiwari joined later. With his connections in local banks as a treasury employee and his satta business, Tiwari proved an asset. But he soon became greedy.

Rajendra Singh's share was half of the value of fake notes he gave. Tiwari

police claim he had purchased a car and used to spend a lot of money on drinking. Documents seized from his house show he had placed an order for aRs 5.18-lakh new offset machine with a speed of printing 7,500 pieces per hour. He was also thinking of printing US dollars and Nepalese rupees.

Comments Dongre: "Rajendra Singh was one of the best forgers. What he lacked was organisational skill." The master forger accepts the compliment gracefully. He reportedly told the police: "You have detected only the rejected notes. But the notes approved by me are still in circulation." Fortunately, the forger himself isn't.

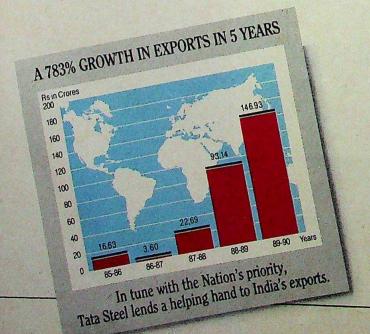
-N.K. SINGH in Raipur

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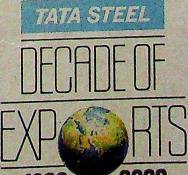
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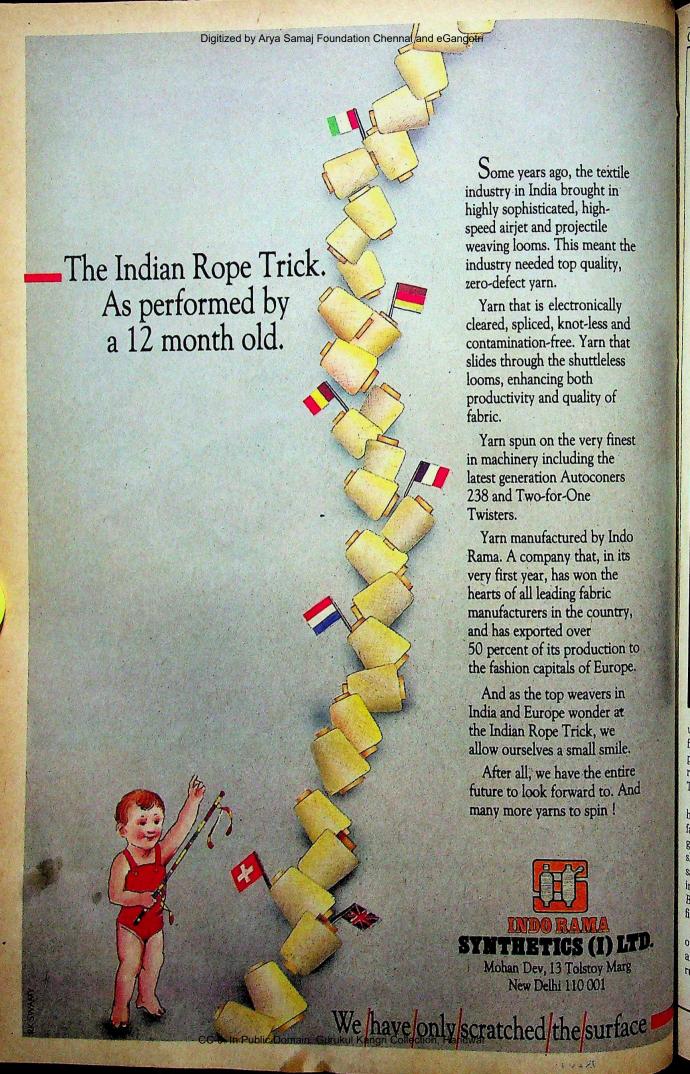


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HORROR FILMS

## the Boom in Doom

### Film makers jump on to the macabre bandwagon

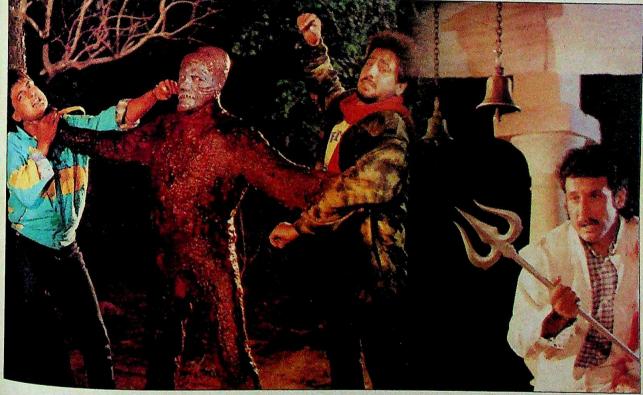
ALL, dark and, well, bat-like, the black-caped figure strides regally down the corridor. The camera zooms in. The eyes glow red, like traffic lights. The two veins protruding from his forehead look as if they are about to burst. The two canine teeth stretch down to his chin. Scared?

But look again. Count Dracula in his Indian incarnation-in Band Dar-

Cineaste Baby in Madras is making them in Tamil: he's just completed Room Number 13. And horror films are no longer the exclusive preserve of the house of Ramsays (see box). Over a dozen small-time film makers have jumped on to the macabre bandwagon during the last few years.

In the beginning the horror patriarch F.U. Ramsay-who died a few





waza, the Ramsay Brothers' new film—doesn't get goose-pimples popping. Actually, he's rather sexy. "Girls run to him, not away from him," says Tulsi Ramsay.

Something is rotten in the state of horror films. Horror's losing its bite: in fact, it's creeping up into the family genre. "I'm called horror uncle by shrieking kids who want autographs," Says Yogesh Chhabra, who stepped into the netherworld with Sau Saal Ke Baad last year. "You can sit watch our films with your sister," adds Tulsi.

Suddenly, the industry is churning out horror films by the dozen: over 20 are being made. In fact, producers are running out of horrific names.

Nor is the south lagging behind.

Still from Khooni Murda (top right); and Roohani Taagat: scary success

months ago-and his seven sons had the monopoly. Do Gaz Zameen Ke Neeche in 1972 was their first foray and India's first horror film. But then came the usurpers. Mohan Bhakri, a dozenhorror-films-old, was the first with Apradhi Kaun in 1982, followed by Cheekh in 1984.

The deluge really came two years ago. Interestingly, most of the new converts to the world of the muddipped ghosts are Punjabi film makers. Devinder Sohal, Yogesh Chhabra, Mohan Bhakri and Vinod Talwar used to make Punjabi films. "I switched to Hindi and horror films after terrorism

came to Punjab," says Bhakri.

Why horror? It comes cheap: from Rs 15 lakh to Rs 25 lakh for each film. And they are sold cheap: for Rs 5 lakh to Rs 6 lakh per territory, some as low as Rs 2.5 lakh. No stars are needed. Or as J.K. Ahuja who has written-or rather ghost written—18 horror films says: "Our Dilip Kumar is the murda (corpse)." No elaborate sets: just inky, lightning-filled nights and abandoned havelis. No expensive screen writers: adaptations (euphemism for copying) of American films are the done thing.

And these films are initially crowdpullers. Boasts Tulsi: "Tum Mere Ho was released the same day in Madras as our Band Darwaza. But we were house full even five days later." And though



horror films may collapse after the first week, their makers would have recovered their costs by then because they are made cheaply and sold cheaply.

There is, it seems, no business like the horror business. Distributors pounce on horror films. "Horror is the only competition to star cast musicals," explains Daran Adarsh of the *Trade Guide* family. All India sales close early for them. Reason: like sex films, horror films sell even before they are completed.

The turning point came with the Ramsays' *Purana Mandir*: the *Sholay* of horror films, it ran for over 100 days. Horror is a quickie. The Ramsays take about 50 days, Bhakri a little less but the upstarts whip one up in 21 days.

Most horror films have been varia-

Randhir Singh's metamorphosis into a monster in *Anokha Dar*: terror thrives

tions of just one basic formula: a ghost on a revengeful spree. What vary are the reasons for revenge, the number of murders committed, and how long the ghost's been dead.

BUT what launched the charge of the horror brigade two years ago was the 12-film ceiling placed on actors. Small producers can now only catch the fallen stars. "You have to tap those not affected by the ceiling," says producer Devinder Sohal who preferred horror to "sitting idle".

The horror stars include the likes of Deepak Parashar, Kiran Kumar, Kanwaljit (of Buniyad fame), Vijayend least have Ghatge, Hemant Birje (Tarzan) and least have creasingly, Raza Murad. But the Back is being chan of the horror movies is Javed Khathe dark now facing competition from the m. worry about their appar

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As for the women, they are as of and droposable as paper napkins. "Only in Bhakri. The girls are authentic," reasons Shyetalist (I Ramsay. The reigning horror queen, Murda) attronly survivor, is Sri Pradha—cashing see to the cannily on the names of two important artificate.

While the Ramsays ruled, the aumore easily ence wanted its horror neat—just that and none of the frills. Pewelief after a clapped when the monster first mass so does ialised or when he killed somewor-compat "Horror is like a whisky ka jhatka," striendly. The

When it comes to jeans, you're either evrong or Wrangh

Raghunath Singh. But today, because of the invasion of Hollywood videos and increasing competition, film makers are looking for newer ways to keep the audience on the ege of the chair—and to keep them on it. Variety has now become the spice of horror. Musc, sex and comedy are the new main ingredients.

Sex and horror seem to go ogether: the beauty and the Vijayend heast have always been a deadly zan) and the Juo. Damsels in negligent nightut the Back to being chased by monsters in Javedkhathe dark of the night hardly om the worry about what's escaping their apparel. But sex really took of and dropped its coyness with . "Only Me Bhakri. The sex-and-horror spesons Shydialist (Kabaristan, Khooni orqueent Murda) attributes the high dos--cashing age to the fact that horror films two impresentomatically given an adult ertificate. "Censors digest sex led, the authore easily in horror films," says eat-just Thhabra. Adds he: "It brings frills. Peoplelief after all that horror."

er first mate So does comedy. It is hord somebutor-compatible and audiencei jhatka, stiendly. The trend began with Purana



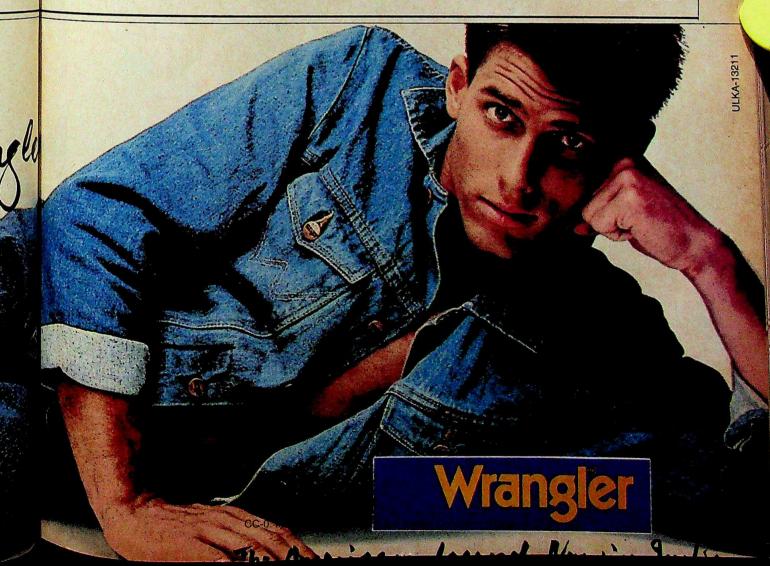
Anirudh in Band Darwaza: doom boom

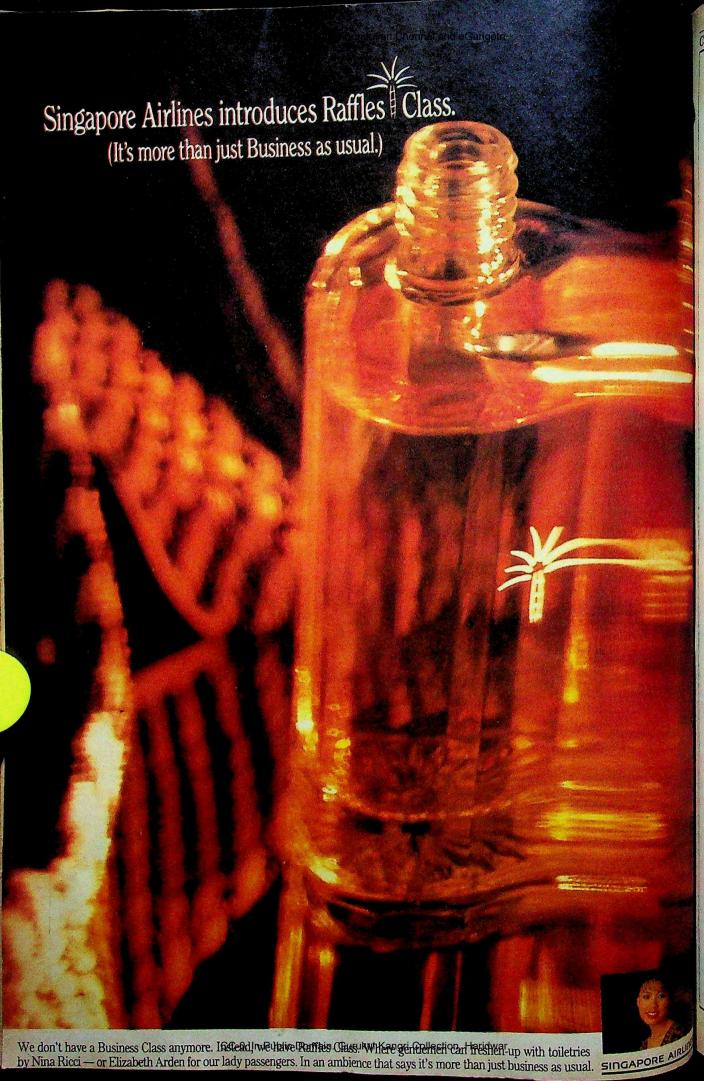
Mandir: here if the ghost didn't get you, you could almost die laughing. The film was a clever parody of Sholay with Jagdeep taking off on Gabbar Singh, Rajendranath on the armless Sanjeev Kumar and Lalita Pawar hamming Basanti (Hema Malini).

Adulterating horror, too, is music. For Band Darwaza the Ramsays lured Anand Milind of Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak into twilight zone. And Chhabra in Sau Saal Baad got Annu Malik to do his music. Bhakri's trump card in his forthcoming film, Roohani Taaqat, is Punjabi singer Gurdas Singh Mann as the romantic lead.

And even while there might be assembly line production in the horror factory, which generally involves re-assembling components of foreign films, some indigenisation is essential. Indian myths are add-ons-tantriks, thakurs and trishuls dominate the rogues gallery. Graveyards are staple fare in Western horror films. But since Hindus

are cremated, film makers have creat-





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ed ghosts out of people who have been murdered and buried without last rites.

Sometimes, they introduce a "Christian background" to get in their graveyards. This doesn't always work, especially in rural areas. Bhakri realised his mistake in *Khooni Murda*, a film that didn't do too well because the hero subdued the ghost with a cross. "People did not know why the ghost was scared of the cross," he explains.

Scene from Kabaristan (left); Jamuna in and as Hatyarin: fright factor

In India, unlike the West, supernatural evil can only be conquered by god or his symbols, explains script-writer Ahuja. Aliens from outer space are alien to the Indian mentality. Thus, trishuls, *Ganga Jal* (holy water), images of Kali Devi, or metallic Oms and, in one case, even the Koran Sharief have been used to scare the ghosts.

Meanwhile, made-in-India horror spreads its tentacles through video and enters middle class living rooms. It is also attracting bigger stars: Rajesh Khanna, Danny Dengzongpa, Amjad Khan and Poonam Dhillon. Others are being wooed ardently: the Ramsays say they have netted Hema Malini for their re-make of Rosemary's Baby and Jackie Shroff for Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom. The Doom Boom, it seems, is on. —MADHU JAIN in Bombay

THE RAMSAYS

## **Horror House**

ORROR is in their genes. For nearly two decades the house of Ramsays had the only licence to frighten. Fatehchand Uttamchand Ramsay and his seven sons were the king and cubs of the horror jungle. But with the patriarch dying a few months ago, it is now a

house divided. But each one is enlarging his own one is enlarging his own nest: three wives and three nephews have now joined the family business. Making it all an ominous 13. Says Tulsi Ramsay: "Forget the other brothers. Shyam, Ganguand I are the main ones."

The Ramsays have kept their brand name. But Kumar and Keshu havedropped their masks, literally. The former has gone upmarket with Ganga Jal (Dimple Kapadia) and Khoj

(Naseeruddin Shah). And Keshu forsook the supernatural in Mera Shikar (Dimple again).

But horror hasn't quite lost its fatal charm for them. Keshu is redoing Agatha Christie's Ten Little Niggers and Poltergeist. "We started the crude horror films," says Shyam, "But now that the rest are on that track, we are changing." They, too, are after the stars, having roped in

The Ramsay clan: a split within



Rajesh Khanna for Om (from Omen). Hema Malini and Suresh Oberoi have signed on for a version of Rosemary's Baby. And they are sounding Jackie Shroff for the indigenisation of a two-in-one: Spielberg's Raiders of the Lost Ark and Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom.

Tulsi and Shyam are proud of their horror heritage. Tulsi refuses to shoot unless he gets 'the feeling'. Says Shyam: "Raj Kapoor was always in love when he shot the

romantic scenes. If he didn't get the feeling, he would pack-up. Similarly, if Tulsi does not have his hair on end, he switches to love or action scenes."

The Ramsays consider themselves the Kapoors of horror films. The connection is a little more concrete. In their first film, Ek Nanhi Munni Ladki Thi, Prithvi Raj Kapoor wore a scary mask. This scene went down well in an otherwise flop film. From that point on, it was horror all the way. —MADHU JAIN

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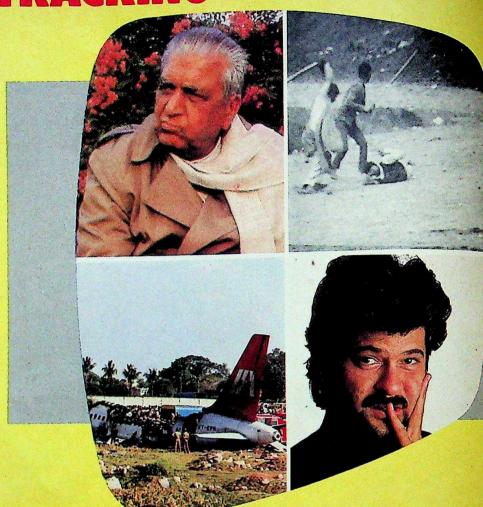
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ENCYCLOPAEDIA

#### back in 1964, when Ni-A Classic Record Vkhil Ghosh, the re-

## Compilation on Indian music nears end

nowned tabla exponent, announced that he would bring out the first encyclopaedia on Indian music, pobody paid him much attention. Today, a quarter of a cen-

bury later, as the Herculean project nears completion, Ghosh and the encydopaedia are the cynosure of the music world.

The reason is evident. Indian music, rich and complex in its variety, is one of the most highly developed systems of its kind in the world. But since musical skills in India are transmitted

orally from generation to generation, there is little written information available. Ghosh's encyclopaedia will thus fill a great void. Recalls Ghosh, now72, who is chiefeditor of the project: "I conceived the idea in 1961 when I realised I didn't have satisfactory answers for my curious students." Even when records existed, they didn't clarify

matters. Says S.D. Pillai, executive director of the project: "Mythification has become part of our culture, For example, Swami Haridas is popularly regarded as Tansen's guru but Abul Fazal's Akbarnama claims Tansen learned from Adil Shah."

Ghosh's encyclopaedia, with its 6,000 entries covering 2,000 pages. intends to change all that. Written in English, the entries are accompanied by rare pictures, drawings, diagrams, maps, engravings, portraits and musical examples with extensive crossreferences. Among the topics covered will be; musical instruments, biographical and genealogical data on musicians, the history of gharanas, Indan and western concepts of beauty and harmony, the relationship of musicto other performing arts, folk music, the psychology of music and its thera-Peutic significance, Afro-Asian music and western music in India.

The sheer size of the project is daunting. New Delhi's Sangeet Natak Academy and England's Asia Society shelved similar attempts midway. Size, though, wasn't the only problem. Another other was that existing systems of holation in Indian music were not adequate. After 10 years of painstaking research, Ghosh invented an entrely new system of notation which

could even record instrumental music. The system is winning general acceptance now,

Money too was a problem: the total cost of the encyclopaedia is Rs 72 lakh. Initially, Ghosh spent from his own pocket. Later, several musicians helped. The late





AMAS BHOJAN

(Clockwise from below) Ghosh; rare photos of Ali Baksh; Sarang; Asad Khan

Pannalal Ghosh, the late Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Amjad Ali Khan, Gangubai Hangal, Pandit Jasraj, Birju Maharaj, Sitara Devi, Shiv Kumar Sharma and N. Rajam have given concerts in aid of the project. The Maharashtra Government recently contributed Rs 6 lakh. But the money still falls short. Complains Ghosh: "People donate willingly for temples and mosques but for projects like mine, money is not easy to come by.

A trickier problem was to resolve

conflicting viewpoints on a range of issues. Says Pillai: "There are raging controversies on the origin of instruments and styles and any development or improvisation is claimed by several

gharanas." Ghosh's solution was to ask the various conflicting schools to argue out their viewpoints and try to convince him.

But these problems came later. In the initial stages, Ghosh's energies were spent on clarifying to himself what he finally wanted the encyclopaedia to be. He spent years reading the most famous reference works on music-the Cambridge Music Dictionary, Grove's Music Dictionary and the Oxford Companion to Music-and discussed

the project with numerous musicians and musicologists. He also built up a rich library of books, journals, treatises, manuscripts, photographs and disc records, and made microfilms of manuscripts he couldn't acquire.

Many musicologists lent support, among them the late Bimal Kanta Roy Chowdhary, the late P. Sambamoorthy, the late

B.C. Deva, Sunil Kothari and Swami Prajnanand who has written the entry on Indian music for the latest edition of Encyclopaedia Britannica. But there were also those who refused to associate with the project because they felt an encyclopaedia which made information readily accessible would dilute India's guru-shishya tradition.

Regardless of the difficulties, Ghosh ploughed on. In 1973, senior musicians and musicologists were appointed to the editorial board and the academic council for the project. And around 300 research scholars in India and abroad began writing entries on different topics, each undergoing a gruelling test: being first cleared by a scrutiniser, before being sent to the editorial board and then for printing.

Ghosh has further plans. He wants to follow up with a volume on Indian dance and drama. And later, Sangeet Mahabharati, the Bombay organisation he heads, plans a 16-volume series on the performing arts. But his greatest contribution will undoubtedly be the music encyclopaedia, an event that the entire art world is awaiting with unprecedented anticipation.

-SHARMILA CHANDRA in Bombay

CONSUMER SAFETY

# Statutory Warning

## Crackdown on smoking and harmful additives

"I read so much against smoking that finally I decided to give up reading.

-Graffiti near a cigarette shop.

OON smokers won't be able to dismiss anti-smoking warnings so lightly. Last fortnight, the Ministry of Environment banned smoking at hospitals, dispensaries, air-conditioned railway compartments, and stadia, and Indian Airlines extended its

ban on smoking to all its domestic flights. A draft legislation proposes to ban cigarette advertis-

ing totally.

Smoking isn't the only area where there has been decisive action. In one breezy fortnight, the Government has asked the industry to publish statutory warnings on pan masalas and fluoride toothpastes; has defended the use of iodised salt in the Bombay High Court; and has forced the soft drinks industry to replace brominated vegetable oil (Bvo) as an emulsion stabiliser and clouding agent in citrusbased drinks.

Pan masala, the pan-substitute which has grown to a Rs 100crore industry, now must carry a warning

saying consuming more than four grams a day is harmful. Argues a manufacturer: "I'll shut down my business if it is proved to be harmful.' But dentists say pan masala is so harmful it should be banned rather than regulated—chewing pan filled with tobacco is a major cause of oral cancer, the most widely prevalent one among Indian males. Says Madhu Mantri, president, Mumbai Grahak Panchayat, a Bombay-based consumer group: "When there's a bomb scare, you cancel a flight. Why can't you ban harmful products?

The regulations reflect the growth of health consciousness among Indians, who have now found an ally in

Minister of State for Environment, Maneka Gandhi.

Despite the onset of the Indian summer-a period in which the soft drinks industry sells nearly 70 per cent of its annual production, sales have been sluggish. Reason: Bvo use has scared consumers. The Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission pulled up Tripp, Campa Orange, Rush, Rasna, Limca and Gold

The regulations reflect the growth of health consciousness among Indians who have rallied around consumer groups to assert their rights.

> Spot. But its replacement, ester gum, was hardly the solution. Unlike Bvo, it is untested and unproven; it is not even permitted as an additive under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act.

> The domestic soft drink manufacturers have been crying foul, claiming the ban is part of a multinational conspiracy (read Pepsi). Pepsi plot or not, Indian soft drinks manufacturers routinely used Bvo-about 45-50 parts per million (PPM)—way above the US permissible norm of 15 PPM. The trouble with Byo is that it causes lesions on arteries, and excessive usage may cause heart trouble. The World Health Organisation termed it harmful in 1969, and it is banned in 129 countries.

Fluoridated toothpaste is another product riven with controversy. The Government made it mandatory from May-end for manufacturers to ensur that fluoride content did not exceed 1,000 PPM, that the expiry date was mentioned prominently, and a wan ing carried, saying: "Children below seven years should not be allowed to use fluoride toothpaste."

This seems to fly in the face of conventional wisdom that fluoride eliminates dental caries. Says Ash Vaidya, regional medical director South Asia, Hindustan Ciba-Geigy," has been proved all over the worldtha fluoride prevents dental caries (tooth decay)." But the Indian Dental Association ation recommends fluoride though

there is a raging international debate on its use In India, fluoride tooth pastes command a mere 7 per cent share in a Rs 176-crore industry But as A.K. Susheelad the All India Instituted Medical Sciences in New Delhi says: "Our oral cavities are very richin blood vessels, so fluoride from toothpaste directly gets into our blood stream."

The buyers are also ques tioning universal salt iodisation despite the widespread ind dence of iodine deficient cy (the cause of abnor mal births and goite To prevent the spread the Government decide to iodise salt. But there has been no thinking specifics. One petition before the Suprem

Court seeks uniform standards iodisation. But since only 5 per cent the population is affected by iodic deficiency, health professionals are that subjecting the rest to iodised sal unfair and possibly harmful.

Making iodisation mandatory any case doesn't ensure compliant Since iodised salt (Rs 2.50 per kilo) costlier than common salt (50 paise) kilo), the iodine-deficient poor will benefit unless subsidies are passed the consumer. But with more wa dog agencies keeping an observant on public health issues, encourage a vigilant government, it won't be before such problems too are tack

-SALIL TRIPATHI in Delhi and Bo



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## COLON AND PROGRAMME Food for Thought

## Massive bungling detected in distribution of US aid

"Beneficiaries actually received less tod than recorded, commodity losses were substantial but rarely reported; persight reviews were superficial or otperformed, known problems were not prected, and stored commodities were not properly protected."

rT'Snot surprising that this scathing indictment is about a programme in India. What's surprising is who it's by-Price Waterhouse, one of the world's largest accounting firms.

The food supplies it's talking about are part of a worldwide progamme run by the States United Agency for International Development (ISAID). Its annual aid to India-\$100 million (Rs 170 crore) worth of bulgur wheat, corn/soya milk blends and vegetable channelled through two American agencies: Co-operative or American Relief Everywhere (CARE) which distributes two-thirds, and the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), a Balti-More-based charity run

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Between 1986 and 1988, crs received nearly two lakh tonnes of supplies (worth \$48 million) which was distributed among pregnant women, actating mothers and children, and as Part of the Food for Work programme, brough 130 "counterparts" who in un distribute supplies to 5,170 "op-<sup>trating</sup> partners''

The findings of the routine audit which became public after The Washhoon Post broke the story last houth alleged that there was possiof food of food, worth \$3 million to \$4 million. In 74 of the 89 centres it investi-Rated, the audit firm discovered that the balances in use were short beighing by 15-20 per cent. Other findings were the use of fictitious names of beneficiaries, diversion of aid. window-dressing of accounts and lower salaries for women.

In one case, a priest told auditors there were sufficient supplies and pointed out stacks of gunny bags filled with food. When auditors climbed over the bags, they found a hollow centre in the stack, leading them to believe the food was diverted. The value of missing food: about \$37,000 (Rs 6,30,000).

> The audit report alleged that there was possible "misuse" of food, worth \$3 million to \$4 million by Catholic Relief Services.

This was

not all. In other cases, auditors found food bags with US Government markings sold in the open market. At one centre, there were 'questionable'' payments of a loan of Rs 1.63 lakh, a scholarship worth Rs 23,500, gifts and donations of Rs 5,725, and a contingency grant of Rs 21,923. At another, auditors found that a large part of funds meant for an afforestation programme was used, of all things, to build a boundary wall.

James DeHarpporte, crs's Indian representative, counters: "We had already initiated action in areas identified. The audit reminds us of what we should do, and our response is, thank you, we already know.'

DeHarpporte underlines the limitations under which cas operates: "I can't change India's social structure: even in the US they don't have equal pay for equal work. Some complaints are unrealistic, like their getting upset about the lack of fire extinguishers in warehouses." But Price Waterhouse—which has years of experience working in Indian conditionsdoesn't agree: "Only a few of the problems ... were inherent to the environment in India or beyond cas's ability to control," it says.

On the discrepancies in weight, cas says Price Waterhouse goofed up because it measured vegetable oil in kgs whereas supplies were in litres. It admitted to poor book-keeping but maintained that the audit findings were based on "speculation, and at times misrepresentation". crs officials also said that there was another loophole in the findings: Price Waterhouse extrapolated to the whole area what they found in "a few" problem areas which

cas had already identified.

crs-which has been operating in India since 1951 and has distributed over \$1 billion (Rs 1,700 crore) in food aid-has taken strong exception to the insinuations. Says DeHarpporte: "We have been working with people like Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa and Baba Amte, Do you believe there could be wilful diversion in such an environment? Just two or three instances should not be blown out of proportion. The real story is of the million people who from this benefit programme." But Price

Waterhouse did not cover "only a few areas"; it covered 28 of the 67 counterparts and 106 of the 2,300 operating partners in two of the four zones in which cas operates.

Though the report did not charge diocese bodies with corruption, authorities were investigating the programme. The report's conclusions, in fact, are less scathing than the raw data: a move usaid officials felt would encourage cas to clean up its act.

They have asked cas to ensure that such deficiencies do not recur and to outline corrective measures for which the US Government will provide a

The cas on its part is going to hire more people, invite outside auditors, reduce food supplies and the number of counterparts, and tighten monitoring.

That's a step in the right direction. What's unfortunate is that it took an audit report to force the change.

-SALIL TRIPATHI in New Delhi

A MAJOR FORCE

IN MINI-STEELIOSTO

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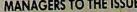
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MANAGERS TO THE ISSUE











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AFFORESTATION

## **Growing Movement**

## Tribals of south Gujarat help in conservation

O the environmental activist the south Gujarat hills have long been a stirring challenge. In the last two decades nearly 40 per cent of the forests have been scythed by the tribals who live off the forests, posing a perpetual threat to the once verdant undulating landscape.

But now things are changing. In a swift and amazing transformation, plants and trees are mushrooming once again all across the hills. There is no longer a fear of the growing plants being eaten by cattle or axed by tribals. For it is the tribals themselves, of the Surat and Bharuch districts, who are at the vanguard of this silent revolution to green the hills again.

The road to recovery began in 1987 when R.S. Pathan, a conservator of forests in the Surat circle, approached the tribals of Gamtalav in Surat district (south Gujarat is predominantly tribal) with a proposal. As one who had worked in south Gujarat for years, he had been a helpless ring-side viewer of the deforestation. Tragically, the destruction was then being encouraged by none other than former chief minister Amarsinh Chaudhary who, in a desperate bid to buy votes in the 1985 assembly elections, had given a free hand to the tribals to cut trees (INDIA TODAY May 1, 1989).

Pathan was convinced that nothing short of the people's involvement could save the south Gujarat hills. He managed to convince the 500-odd tribals of Gamtalav hamlet that if they did not look after the forests they would have to suffer. So severe was the deforestation in the area that the villagers had to climb seven km on foot to get fuelwood.

Advised by Pathan, the tribals first cut the stumps of the felled trees and brought them at par with the ground level to facilitate the healthy growth of the coppice (growth from the stump of a felled tree). Then the tribals began to guard the hills from encroachment by cattle.

Within months, three to four healthy coppice sprouted on each stump. And after one year, under the supervision of the forest staff, the villagers began cutting the coppice leaving only one healthy coppice on each

stump intact. Today, a jungle is gradually coming up over the hillside. At the same time, the tribals' wood needs are also being met.

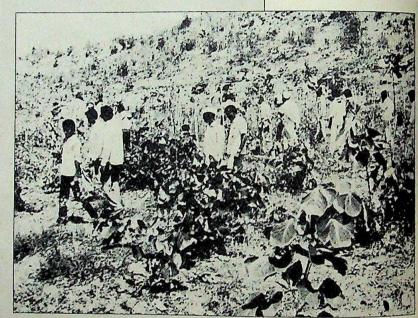
Emboldened by the success of the Gamtalav experiment, the forest personnel fanned out to nearby villages and found the response very encouraging. The villagers of nearby Phulwadi,

out, the tribals will be the worst sufferers." Adds Maganbai Chaudhary, the village sarpanch: "Earlier, we used to just rob the jungles without giving them anything back. Now, our relationship with the forest is based on give-and-take. The jungles don't belong to the Forest Department alone but to all of us."

Since knowledge of ecology is the key to motivation, the Forest Department's thrust now is on educating the tribals. And once they are briefed scientifically on coppice-cutting methods, there will be little need for patrolling or help from the forest staff. Says Yogendra Patel, a range forest officer

at Mandvi, near Gamtalav: "Initially when Pathan came up with the

Coppice sprouts in Gamtalav hills



Tribals in Surat, Bharuch, Valsad and Dang districts are now involved in the unique movement to grow trees.

Titoi, Khodamba, Kalibill, Katkuva and Rakaskhadi, subsequently approached the Forest Department for assistance to try out the Gamtalav experiment in their region.

The drive has evolved into a full-fledged movement, spreading to over six dozen villages in Surat and Bharuch districts. It is also finding roots in the nearby Valsad and Dangs districts. Says Ramjibhai Chaudhary, a village elder in Gamtalav: "We have realised that if the jungles are wiped

idea, it seemed quite unattractive. But now we feel it is the best thing that has happened."

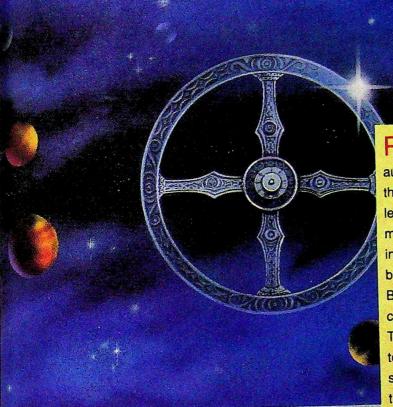
For its mass involvement and earnestness, the drive should rank as one of the most important movements to save forests after the Chipko and Appiko

movements. Says S. Chaturvedi, a young subdivisional forest officer: "The tribals are obsessed with the Jungle Bachao campaign. They are proving better protectors of the forests than some of the paid Forest Department employees."

There is poetic justice in all this. That having in the first place been responsible for the denudation of forests, the tribals should now be responsible for their regeneration.

—UDAY MAHURKAR

# Anticipating The Times



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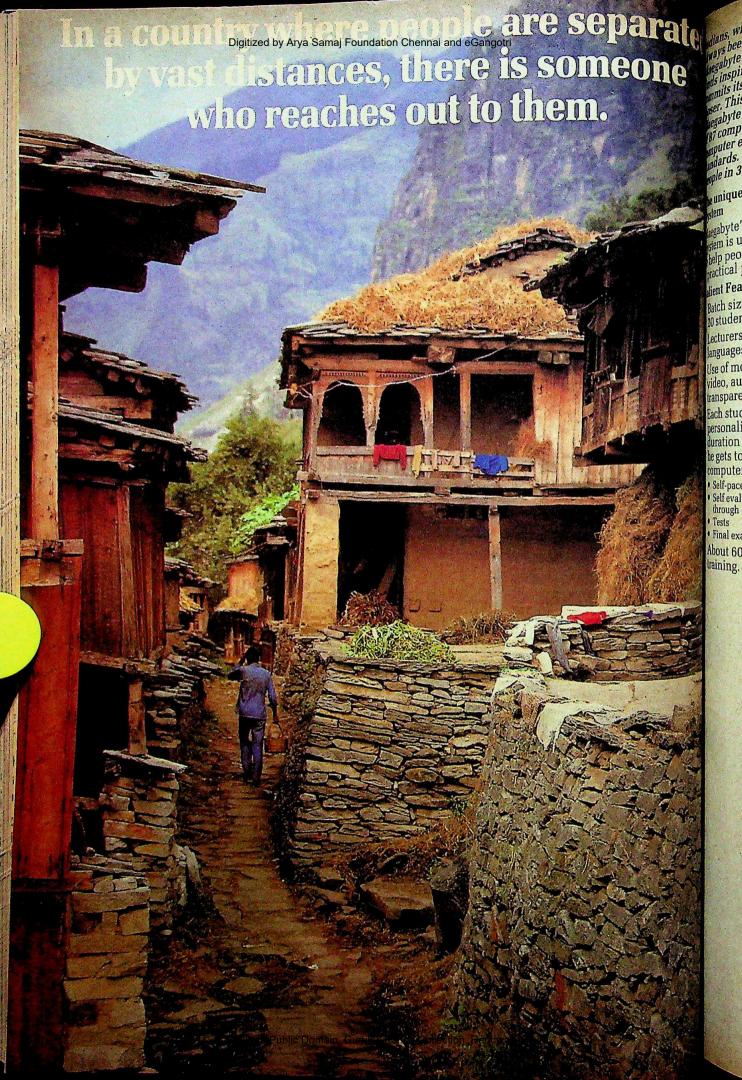
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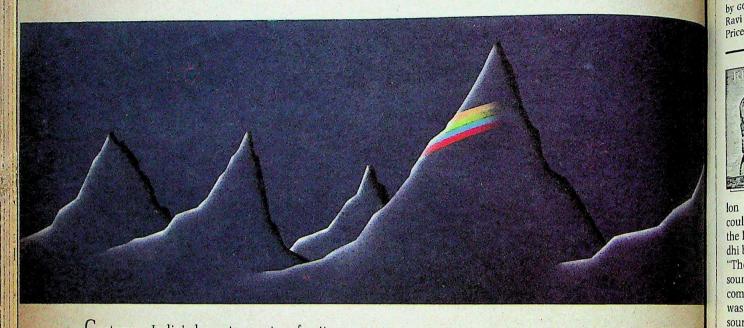


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— the dawn of a new era

# Trite Effort

A fine theme is botched

REFUGE by GOPAL GANDHI Ravi Dayal Publisher Price: Rs 85; Pages: 178



GOPAL Gandhi's Refuge has the makings of a great book-dramatic potential, pathos and, above all, topicality. The story revolves around the lives of Tamil plantation workers in Cey-

lon facing repatriation to India. It could have been a compelling novel in the hands of a better writer. But Gandhi botches it from the very first lines: "The first siren at Craigavon estate sounded at six in the morning. Velu, a compactly built, light skinned man was the sounder." Grammatically sound perhaps, and simple, but Gandhi is no Hemingway and the result is dull. As are the first 80-odd pages of the book, replete with cliches.

Gandhi's Ceylon is the Ceylon of the post-1964 Indo-Ceylon Agreement. At a time when ethnic rivalries were just beginning to enter the island's mainstream; when the musty remnants of colonialism still lingered over the tea plantations, and wafted

Gandhi: dull and cliche-ridden



out from the clubs of the brown sahibs; when plantation workers eked out a wretched living—at such a time Ganthi was the first secretary in the high commission, working on the repatriation of Indian Tamils to India.

He describes with equal degrees of earnestness and self-consciousness (both fatal for a good novel) the parallel

era

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lives of poor plantation workers and that of their oppressors. The feeling is there, the language isn't. Representing the lower end of the plantation ladder is a poor Tamil family, at whose centre is the novel's heroine, Valliamma, young, but forced to grow up early with the responsibility of home, the burden of illicit love, the emotional aridity of a marriage of convenience and, finally, the pain of repatriation.

Typifying the brown sahib is Nimal Rupasinghe, superintendent of the estates. Nimal's characterisation is Gandhi's best bit of work. But even here Gandhi nearly ruins the effect with his last lines in the book, which ends with Nimal's suicide: "Within seconds, Nimal was the property of the fathomless caverns of the sea." Trite to -KAVITHA SHETTY the end.

## Fraud Bazaar

Cross-cultural hype spoofed

**BOMBAY DUCK** 

by farrukh dhondy Jonathan Cape; distributors Rupa & Co Price: Rs 262; Pages: 316



MAKE the casserole part-London, Bombay. Pour in the Ramayana as base. in Fling Rastafarian, nese, and emigre Indian actors. Add a dollop of rural poli-

tics, and a touch of ethnic exhibitionism. Get a Brit impresario to stir the broth. Garnish randomly with baby adoption rackets, gun-running, and fundamentalist movements; and spice with a couple of lesbians, who make it on the side with a Parsee writer. To render the recipe yet more daunting, try and make the whole goulash acerbically funny on the palate.

In Bombay Duck Farrukh Dhondy does all that, and amazingly manages to ladle out not a wildly anarchic potpourri but a marvellous send-up of the fraud bazaar that makes for cultural internationalism.

Ali Abdul Rahman, nee Gerald Blossom, is a stage actor who tells the first half of the story, mouthing a comic black patois. His story is essentially his discovery by David Stream, a stage sultan of cross-cultural hype-obvi-

ously modelled on Peter Brook-who is mounting an international production of the Ramayana.

Stream spouts spiel on trans-cultural harmonies, and decrees random castings, with Ali playing Ram, and Siegfried, a thick-set German, Ravana; aesthetic is restored through Sita. played by Anjali, an Indian. The phoney production runs through its ups and downs, even as immigrant characters-plus others like the rural messiah Tilak, and Sara, one-time journalist who will later turn avenging angel-bob about in the background to illustrate the hoax inherent in race

Dhondy: funny and provocative



politics, where the minority exploit the anti-racist majority towards increasingly narrow and inane ends-gobbling up grants, for one.

With an Indian patina, sanctimoniously applied, the play moves to Delhi, where fundamentalist tragedy awaits it in the form of rioting and murder. Ali slips out of the book's Xerxes . Xavaxa frame: xtraordinaire' takes over. He is parttime teacher, aspiring writer, unwitting Parsee historian and baby adoption racketeer; also, the lover of lesbians, school girls, and sundry Indian maids. Xerxes tells a fragmented story, but one whose essence is no different from Ali's: transcontinental beatitudes bear the intrinsic deception that marks the Bombay Duck, which in reality is no duck at all, but a fish.

-TARUN J. TEJPAL

## **Power Players**

Superb account of spy wars

THE GREAT GAME
On Secret Service in High Asia
by PETER HOPKIRK
John Murray

Price: Rs 584; Pages: 562



LONG before the inter-continental ballistic missile, long before the Berlin Wall, and long before the advent of Cold Warriors the world witnessed the long war of The Great Gamers.

Tough, ruthless, cunning and singleminded in their pursuit of power and territory for their countries—Russia and Great Britain—these remarkable and deserts and territories of the fiercest tribes. The die was cast with the East India Company beginning to worry about their domain, looking at Tsarist Russia expanding at 55 square miles a day towards the end of 18th century.

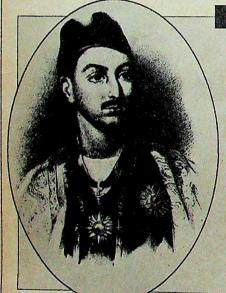
London foresaw the inevitability of the Russian conquest of Central Asia and then a drive into India through Khyber and Bolan. Napoleon decided to invade India and collected an army of 55,000 which waited in Cairo for the forces of Tsar Alexander to join up from Moscow. The Tsar died unexpectedly and so did Napoleon's plans. Meanwhile, the buildup had won the day for the Russophobes and persuaded Britain to join the battle.

With this began a sequence of sorties by spies from either side into areas that so far existed as vast blanks on the maps. Some were swallowed by deserts, some beheaded by the xenophobic Khans, some simply lost their way in the wild. But many rewrote history. Also geography. Francis Younghusband, William Moorcroft, Alexander Burnes, and scores of others

to halt the Russian "advance" towards India. It brought him face-to-face with a worthy rival in Mehkti Rafailov. supposedly a Kashmiri shawl dealer who came to Leh, apparently en route to Lahore to bring Maharaja Ranjit Singh a missive from the Tsar to rise against his British friends.

Arthur Connolly, who first coined the phrase The Great Game, was beheaded by the ruler of Bokhara. And Alexander Burnes, who roamed Afghanistan as a native, opening the way for British conquest, along with his Kashmiri spy Mohan Lal was finally lynched by a Kabul mob.

The rival players were more daring, if a bit less innovative, and it was due to the collective single-mindedness of men like these that the two empires which began with their Asian borders 2,000 miles apart came within 20 miles of each other. The Russians bagged much of Central Asia. The British managed to keep Tibet, save Sinkiang, and bring Afghanistan under their influence.



## E X C E R P T

However, if Moorcroft was written off by his superiors during his lifetime... today he is honoured for his immense contribution to the exploration of the region. It is in the realm of geopolitics that his real vindication lies. For it was not so long after his death that his repeated warnings about Russian ambitions in Central Asia began to come true.

Perhaps Moorcroft's final vindication lies in the location of his lonely grave...near the spot where, a century later, Soviet armour poured into Afghanistan. He could have asked for no finer epitaph.



men were locked in a desperate fight for more than two centuries.

Legends, intrigue, romance, were all woven into the game they played. The game in which there were no quarters given, that spawned many a bestseller and that was played in the periphery of the Indian subcontinent.

Peter Hopkirk, a former British army officer gives one of the most readable accounts of the contest in the Great Game country, stretching from Turkey's eastern borders to the edge of Ladakh, cutting across some of the world's most inhospitable mountains

Mohan Lal, the Kashmiri spy (left), and Sir Alexander Burnes, his mentor

were more than mere spies guarding the expanding frontiers of an empire. They were also explorers who discovered a part of Asia that still continues to intrigue and baffle the world.

Moorcroft, a veterinarian, who first went to Tibet looking for hardy horses to improve the Company's bloodstock discovered, instead, a couple of poodles of European pedigree. He concluded the Russians had been to Tibet before him. That changed his life, He launched himself into a campaign

But defeat came soon. First the Afghans, at their best fighting a guerilla war, drove them out of their country, battered and bloodied and then the sunset on the Empire in India. The Russians refused to learn from the plight of the British and had their own misadventure in Afghanistan ending in an ignominious retreat in 1988.

And now, as the Islamic, subnationalistic fervour churns the Soviet Central Asian republics, the Game could be finally heading for a momentous finish: in defeat for both sides.

-SHEKHAR GUPTA

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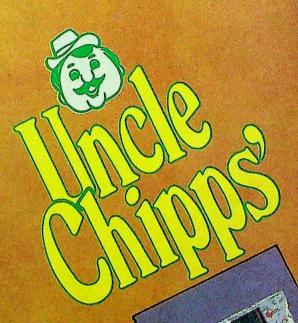
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Vachani: still from Eyes of Stone: haunting theme

She has worked with Mira Nair on Salaam Bombay, but that is no longer her claim to fame. This was ensured by the 12th International Festival of Visual Anthropology and Social Docu-

mentation in Paris last month, where Nilita Vachani's debut Eyes of Stone, a 96-minute film shot in Rajasthan about women and the ritual of spirit possession and cure, won the documentary best award. Says the 30year-old: "Though it's an Indian theme, people the world over have similar values which accounts for the response to the film.'

He's trading in ravage and rapine for song. It's not quite a farewell to arms, but arch villain Amrish Puri will soon use his whips

and guns less and those famous vocal chords more. The first time he sang for his supper was in Hatimtai, but now it is getting to be a habit. The prince of darkness managed to croon love songs to Jaya Prada in Aaj ka Arjun like Mashuka Mashuka, and do a song and dance

Puri: villainous voice



number with Sridevi in Garjana. Says Puri of his new found talent: "We are like

a basket of fruits. Whatever you ask for we can take out and give to you." Now that has the ring of villainy we know him for.

 Blood does not course through his body, but he has a waist, shoulder and

Merlin: metallic mechanic



expandable lar robot line), was conceived by the Metallurgical and Engineering Consultants, Madras,

and manufactured by Automation Sieflex and Robotics (SAR). Says SAR President Vivek Mathur: "We are thrilled-robotics in India has come of age." Merely, Merlin's magic wand.

 The International Dance Festival Montpellier in France is paying a tribute to Guru Muthuswamy Pillai, 69, this month. It is the first time such a gesture has been made towards the East. In

Montpellier, Pillai will con-

Pillai with Petit: kudos

duct a workshop, along his student Elizabeth Per Pillai has also been confere with the award of Cheval des arts et des lettres, foresta lishing a bridge between French and Indian cultur through art. Says he: "0 natya shastras are based nature. Grace and feeling must come naturally Doubtless.



#### Shruti: acro'brat'

 At an age when m children can barely wa straight, Shruti thinks not ing of hanging upside do from a balancing beam a even doing a head star Somersaulting with eland 19-month-old girl is perh the youngest gymnastin dia. Her father V.N. Prasu a wrestling coach with Kerala State Transport poration, has been tal the toddler to the gymna training centre in Trice drum twice a week for last six months. Says father: "We never taught anything. She developed interest on her own. years more, and we'llkuo her interest was not mere child's passing fancy.



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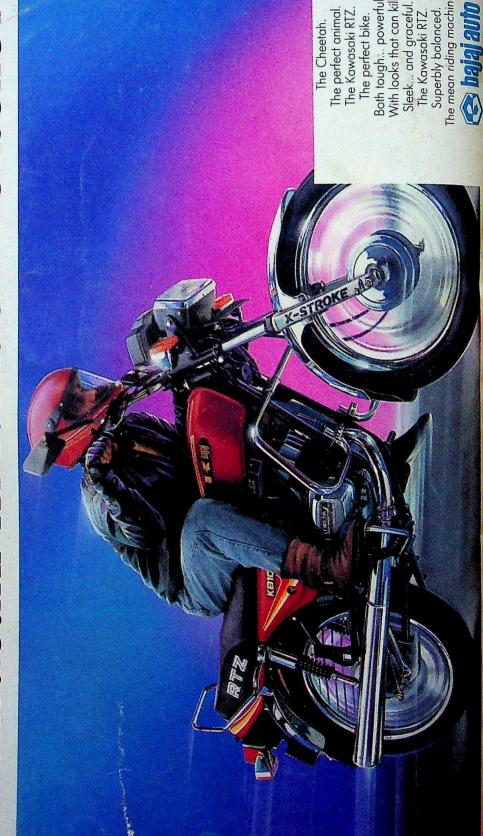
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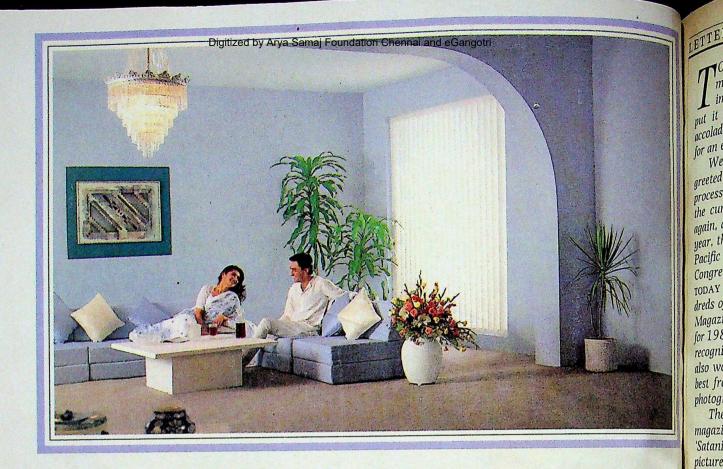
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10 be adjudged the best Asian magazine even once is cause for immense pride for all of us who put it together. But to earn the accolade twice in succession makes for an ecstatic feeling.

Well, that's the good news that

greeted us as we began the process of bringing out the current issue. Once again, as it had done last year, the prestigious Asia Pacific World Publishing Congress chose INDIA TODAY from among hundreds of competitors for its Magazine of the Year award for 1989. In addition to this recognition, the magazine

also won awards in three other categories—the best front cover, runner-up for the best use of photography and the best written editorial.

The cover that was adjudged best was the magazine's March 15 story on Salman Rushdie, entitled years this will indeed be our endeavour. For, as they say in 'Satanic Storm'. The photography award was for the pictures taken by former photo editor Raghu Rai for the essay, 'Of Human Bondage', a story about a Sarus crane, Kurkut, that had been adopted by the village of Khajuraho. (Kurkut, incidentally, is no more).



The prize winning cover, photo essay and editorial



The editorial prize was given to Deputy Editor Dilip Bobb's November 15 assessment of the country's former prime minister in his analytical story, "Five Years of Rajiv Gandhi: The Promise That Failed."

More than anything else the recognition is continuing proof that the Indian print media has arrived on the international scene, and is beginning to make an impact. In keeping with this awareness our magazine has also taken steps to break out of some of its traditional geographical

confines to cover fast-moving events in China, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in competition with the best in the business. And the response from our readers has been generously enthusiastic.

Besides making us feel good, such awards also put a special responsibility on us not to rest on our laurels, but to rise to new heights of professionalism. And in the coming

journalism, you are only as good as your last story.

#### IN FOCUS THIS FORTNIGHT



## The Organs Bazaar

The trade in organs taken from live donors, has assumed alarming proportions. Kidneys, corneas, skin—everything can be bought and sold for a price. This is spawning troubling ethical questions.

COVER STORY ......60



## Beaten Into Retreat

Nemesis, and antagonistic partymen, appear to have finally caught up with Ramakrishna Hegde. Many scandals and many resignations later, the savvy politician is out in the cold. At least for the moment.

SPECIAL REPORT ......29



### **Embattled Giants**

The National Front Government has turned the heat on big business houses like Reliance, the Chhabrias, Oswal Agro and the MAC group which till yesterday enjoyed the political patronage of the Rajiv regime.

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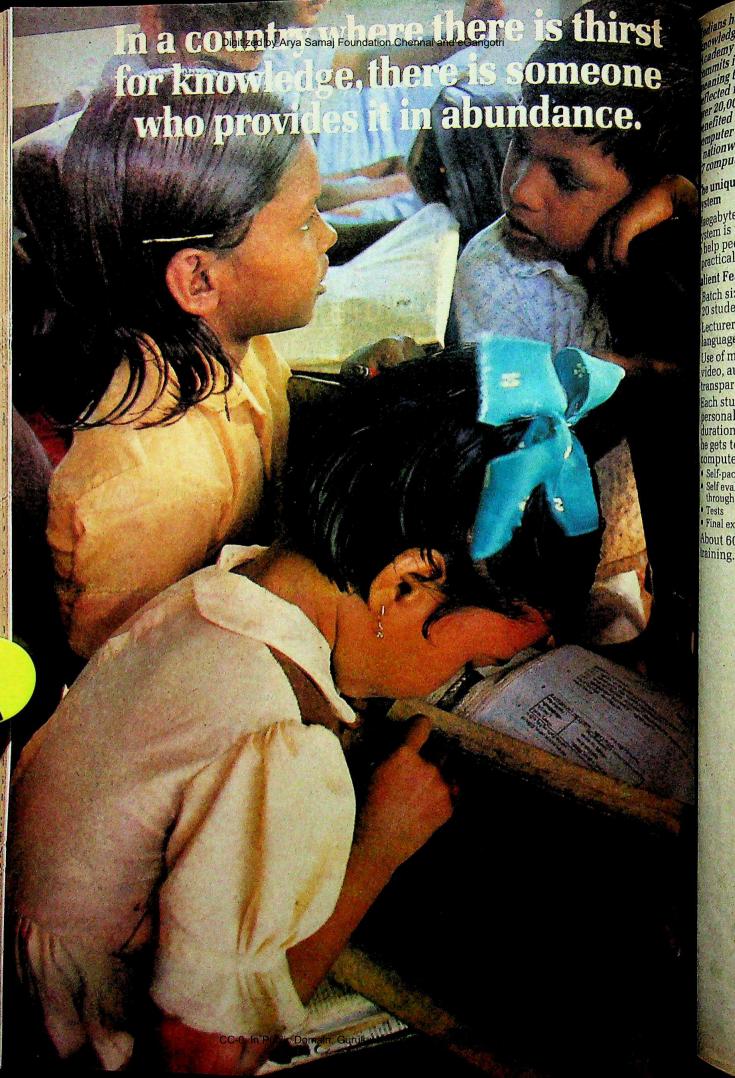
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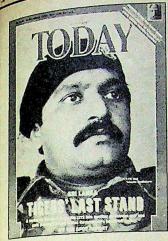
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VOLUME Y





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## ASTUTE POLICY

The National Front Government's stand of non-interference ("Tigers' Last Stand", July 15) in Sri Lanka's internal affairs needs to be lauded. If former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi had also shown such political sagacity the Indian Army wouldn't have had to pay such a heavy price.

New Delhi

S. KATYAL

#### CAUSE FOR CONCERN

Your cover story ("Are We Prepared?", June 30) should serve as an eye-opener for both India and Pakistan. The sparring neighbours shouldn't ignore the threat of a nuclear war that is almost certain in case of an armed conflict between them. Bhubaneswar RADHAKANTA HOTA

- In case of war it is likely that both Saudi Arabia and Iran will give logistic support to Pakistan. To counter this threat and tilt the balance in our favour Indian defence planners should acquire more sophisticated weapons. New Delhi APOORY PANDEY
- It is ironic that even as traditional barriers such as the Berlin Wall are being pulled down the world over, the Indo-Pak border is being barricaded with barbed wires, high-powered sodium vapour lamps and sentry posts. SURENDRA MOODLIAR
- At a time when the rest of the world is talking about peace it is unfortunate that India and Pakistan are discussing the possibility of war. Vishakhapatnam

R.K. GAUTAM

■ The possibility of a war should make us reflect on our moral responsibility to prevent such a tragedy. Under such circumstances, what should India do to prevent a catastrophe? Terrorists have managed to win over the people of Kashmir by raising the spectre of a Hindu India. Responsible Hindu leaders should not aggravate the situation by advocating a Hindu rashtra.

Trichur

Fr. WERNER CHAKKALAKAL

#### POVERTY OF POLITICS

The Janata Dal isn't the only party to be plagued by infighting ("Wrecking Games", June 30). It is a problem being faced by all political parties in the country. Modern politics is more a triumph of personality over party and so politicians spend most of their time making skilful manoeuvres to further their careers.

Gandhinagar

BADRINARAYAN SINGH

■ The Congress(I)'s recent efforts at staging a political come-back with the help of other parties only goes to show that the former ruling party has lost faith in its ability to muster the support of the people.

**Faridabad** 

RICHARD RUBEN

■ It is heartening to note that the BJP is finally indulging in healthy criticism of the Government instead of obstructing its functioning.

New Delhi

LALIMA ANEJA DANG

■ The present National Front Government isn't very different from the old Janata government of 1977. The political stage remains the same—it is only the actors that have changed.

Coimbatore

S.A. SRINIVASA SARMA

#### **CRIMINAL LINKS**

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mulavam Singh Yadav's criminal links ("The Company He Keeps", June 30) shatter all the Janata Dal Government's claims of providing a clean and efficient administration.

Bangalore

ROHIT R. DAS

■ It seems that Mulayam Singh Yadav is starting a school for scoundrels by backing noted criminals in the state. Unable to discriminate between a hardened criminal and a victim of circumstance, his justifications for the company he keeps appear quite unconvincing.

Meerut

P.N. BANERJI

#### DIVIDED LOYALTIES

The situation in Punjab hasn't improved since the V.P. Singh Government took over ("The Malaise Deepens", June 30). If at all, it has only become worse because of Simranjit Singh Mann's ambivalent stand. It remains unclear whether his loyalties lie with the Indian nation or with the terrorists. His participation in the bhog ceremonies of known terrorists will certainly not help in the process of restoration of peace in Punjab.

Mussoorie -

PANKAJ SINGHAL

#### LIVING LEGEND

The photo essay on the charismatic social worker Abdul Sattar Edhi ("Pakistan's 'Father Teresa''', June 30) made interesting reading. It is heartening to find someone like him in the strife-torn atmosphere of Karachi. His pragmatic belief that one should serve first and pray only when one has the time for it is also commendable.

Coimbatore

N.P. LAKSHMINARAYAN

#### SHORTSIGHTED POLICY

Our leaders are constantly making grandiose plans ("The Wages of Sin" June 30) for the upliftment of the poor. However, they never go down to the grassroots level to see if their policies are actually implemented.

Bhubaneswar

**DHANANJAY PATRO** 

#### **BRAIN DRAIN**

I didn't mean to sound arrogant when I said that advertising agencies in the Gulf have more sophisticated equipment than those in India ("Lure of the Lucre", June 30). In my opinion, Indian agencies still stand head and shoulders above those in the Middle East.

Dubai

RAVI RAO

■ Though the rush of HM and HT graduates to the Middle East may have

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LETTERS

led to a brain drain, these people are not to blame. In fact, it is the complete lack of opportunity in India that is responsible for this movement.

ARVINDER ROOPRAO

With the Eastern Bloc currently in a state of flux and Hongkong's uncertain future, there are tremendous trading and investment opportunities in the Gulf countries.

M.D. RAMESH MURTHY Dubai

#### HIGH SPIRITS

The giants of the liquor trade ("Time for Cheer", June 30) should try and offer beer at competitive rates to the poor since harmful country-made liquor is often all that is available to them.

Bangalore

D.B.N. MURTHY

#### REVIEWING STRATEGY

In the 40 years since Independence India doesn't seem to have gained much from either socialism or a free market economy ("Dare to be Free", June 30). On the one hand, market forces have consistently been stifled. And on the other, controls have led to corruption and the creation of a parallel economy. It is high time the country's planners put an end to this liberal schizophrenia.

New Delhi

GYAN CHAND CHOPRA

■ It is time that the objectives of the public sector undertakings were reviewed keeping in mind the interest of the nation rather than the interest of any particular individual.

Kuwait

V.K. JADON

#### PARCHED LAND

The scarcity of water ("Waiting for Water", June 30) in our country is very severe. The Government must first ensure a regular supply of water and then introduce measures to make its use more judicious.

Guwahati

08

P. LALA

#### A CLARIFICATION

Eyes of Stone did not win an award at the International Festival of Visual Anthropology and Social Documentation (Eye-catchers, June 30). It was awarded the Best Documentary prize at the International Women's Film Festival, Montreal in June this year. New Delhi VANGELIS KALAMBAKAS

Executive Producer, Eyes of Stone

#### A DELICATE BALANCE

Prime Minister V.P. Singh may appear confident and unruffled (The Artful Dodger", June 15) but he should realise that he and his National Front Government are walking a polifical tightrope. Not only is he answerable to critics within his own party bu he also has to strike a delicate balance between the two ideological extreme of the political spectrum—the Left and the BIP.

Madras

SHANTHI KALYAY

#### NEED FOR OBJECTIVITY

Since the flight IC-605 ("Dispute Over Findings", June 15) inquiry requires a panel of jurors conversant with technical matters, perhaps the National Transportation Safety Board should be reinstated. In fact, it is probably the only body that is capable of making an objective assessment the issue.

New Delhi

ASHOK BHARGAU

#### LOSING GROUND

Since the Indian position on the Kashmir problem isn't supported by either the US or the USSR ("A Crucial Mission", June 15) it is likely that the matter may be taken up at the IN again. But India should realise that if plebiscite is held in the state the result this time definitely won't be in is favour.

Bangalore

■ At a time when the threat of at India-Pakistan war looms large over the horizon, US efforts to try and defus tension in the subcontinent are car tainly commendable. While the Indian Government has correctly rejected the suggestion of multi lateral talks on the explosive Kashmir issue, it should are preciate the initiative taken by the is to bring about a settlement between the hostile neighbours. SANDEEP MOHANI Cuttack

#### DISPELLING MYTHS

The incisive peep into the world eunuchs ("A Bawdy Festival", Juli 15) will certainly go a long way dispelling all misconceived notice about hijras. Perhaps, now people won't be so scornful of them and will able to understand that their problems and anxieties are no different for NIRMAL KUMAR MIRA those of others.

Durgapur

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NTHI KALYAN

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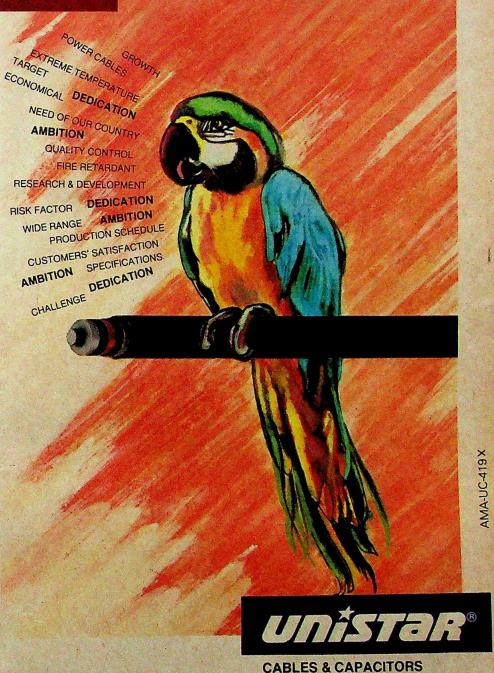


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#### COMMENT

## The Guilty Socialist

N the question of the future of the economy, everybody belonging to just about every shade of political opinion has been trying to have his cake and eat it too. In the first breath they all agree on the need for encouraging more market forces. But in the very next they scream bloody murder when they find their vested oxes being gored by the pointed horns of competition.

L.K. Advani waxes eloquent about the need to dilute FERA and to free the domestic economy from the statist bonds of the Nehruvian era. But no sooner does the Government announce its liberalised industrial policy than his party spokesmen fulminate against it with a rhetoric that would do a Krishna Menon proud. And the Chandra Shekhar socialists who, in moments of unblinkered judgement, admit that Indian companies with multinational

links are a national asset, are stricken suddenly with xenophobic self-righteousness, as if the country is about to be overrun by another East India Company. And Congress(I), that erstwhile torchbearer for the 21st century in which the computer was to be king, that champion of foreign collaborations, now sees visions of international bankers and IMF arm-twisters taking over the corridors of South Block. Pepsi-colonialism is at the door.

Even Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh, who now claims that he is simply carrying forward to its logical next phase the libera-

lisation process that he had started when he was Rajiv Gandhi's finance minister, is suddenly developing conscience pangs about conspicuous consumers galloping with greed across the amiri rekha.

Whether politically inspired or genuine, the protestations reflect the guilt of all socialists flush with their first fornication with the tumescent forces of the free market. And for atonement—a form of economic self-flagellation—they scream rape against the wealthy or foreign forces.

But underlying all these assertions is the central Fabian dogma, only now under vigorous challenge from modern economists, that wealth, somehow, creates poverty. This fundamentalist mantra has gained wide subliminal acceptance even though no less a person than Marx vigorously celebrated the dynamism and drive of the bourgeoise in ushering in the modern world. And yet over and over we are told that wealth—new technologies, the accumulation of capital for investment, new jobs, scientific break-manufacture, new skills—is the cause of poverty.

And the acceptance of this theory creates a pathetic created by men and women engaged in economic enter-

prise, a government exalts the only demonstrable exercise in curtailing poverty and increasing wealth. But this often remains only a passing fit of rationality. For almost simultaneously, in a retreat from reality, governments plunge headlong into the typical soak-the-rich and beggarthe-wealthy blandishments. Moving full circle from liberalisation to amiri rekha.

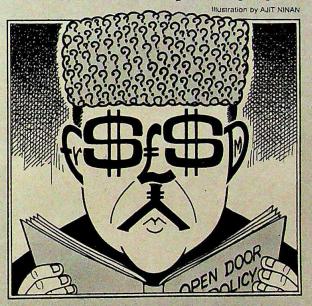
BUT where, in an increasingly dynamic and economically-conscious and, yes, mobile society like India does one draw this wretched line? The econometrists and plansters, and those who borrow their thoughts from Ricardo and Kaldor use this argument to justify the role of big government in redistributive economic policies. Typical arguments: top 0.2 per cent of families own 60 per cent of all

family wealth and bottom 50 per cent none at all. Or, top 3 per cent get 20.8 per cent of the pre-tax income and bottom 40 per cent get 10 per cent. And so on.

The trouble with these formulations is they assume that Indian economic society is static and there's no movement up and down the economic ladders. It is impossible to measure the wealth of a country like India or even improvements in quality of life through such exercises. Even if there are layers of distribution of wealth they are not permanent. The economy cannot be flattened out. Firms go bankrupt, new ones

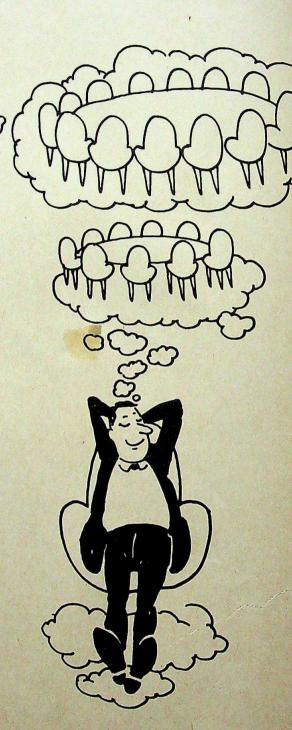
appear. Millions of impoverished, homeless Punjabis settled across India after Partition and yet today by dint of enterprise they probably enjoy the richest per capita income of any linguistic group. And hill migrants, even refugees from Bangladesh, have shops, repair factorles, transport companies. They own houses. Even cars. They are not the beneficiaries of the socialist government's redistributive largesse which has benefited mostly its own babus like the spoils of the East India Company benefited its inside traders.

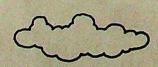
The conspicuous consumption of the transgressors of the amiri rekha is not necessarily the result of being rich. It is to a large extent because of high taxation. When the return on new investment is gobbled up by the state the wealthy refuse to invest in enterprise and sink their money in what Keynes called the "sumps of wealth"—new cars, fancier houses. Vishwanath Pratap Singh has shown himself a practical man. He is right in his quest for speedier development and if the socialists get left behind, well, too bad for them. But he must stop explaiting his socialist guilt by burdening himself with rekhas and dogmas and get along with the business of growth. In the quest for the creation of national wealth there's nothing to fear but fear itself.





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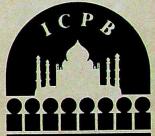
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#### Staying Alive

• Fazlul Haq, the wellknown Urdu writer, critic and head of the department of Urdu in Delhi University. was the butt of a cruel hoax last fortnight. An apparent



prankster sent a press release to the Delhi office of the Indian Express—using the Delhi University letterhead-announcing that the professor had died of cardiac arrest the previous night.

The note listed the scholar's many achievements including his books. papers and translations. To further compound the insult, the note added that Professor Haq was popularly known as 'Lul', which is a colloquial term for a bum. The Indian Express promptly published the news on its local page and headlined it 'Prof F. Lul dead'.

The next morning, the phone wouldn't stop ringing at the professor's house. Sympathisers, who had read the newspaper report, began expressing heartfelt tributes to the departed soul and relatives began pouring in from Aligarh in mourning attire.

The indignant professor called the Express office and made two sharp points: "There are two mistakes in the report," he told the desk. "Firstly, my name is not Lul. And secondly, I'm not dead ? but very much alive, healthy and kicking."

#### Comeback Efforts

• Giani Zail Singh is not about to retire gently into that good night. He's sporting a new avatar-chief patron of the Foundation for the Freedom of Information, an industrialist-backed trust that recently gave awards to journalists.

Also on the board is the controversial Trilochan Singh, soon to retire as chief of Delhi's tourism corporation, but better known as Buta Singh's buddy and the Giani's PR man. Put the two together and you instantly have the makings of a political lobby. And that's what the new foundation really is. Backed by sections of the BJP and the Left, it promises to be another launch pad for Zail Singh's aspiration to contest





for President again after R. Venkataraman's term ends.

#### Taken Off

• Prime Minister V.P. Singh's austerity drive has already claimed its first victim, predictably from the Devi Lal camp. Last fortnight, as the diktat to curb



foreign tours landed, most ministers just chuckled as they'd already completed their foreign jaunts. But there was one still poring over his itinerary. Jagdip Dhankar, the MP from Rajasthan-known more for being a Devi Lal protege than as deputy minister for parliamentary affairs-was about to leave with a parliamentary delegation to Paris and planned to extend his trip to the US and Rome. Loathe to defy Singh's directive, he cut his trip from 18 days to seven and spent several hours with Air India officials to get the maximum mileage out of his Delhi-London-Paris ticket without any extra expense. He finally got the Italian connection for just Rs 48 extra. Surely, V.P. Singh's auditors wouldn't mind writing that much of

#### Farcical Democracy

 While the Janata Dalis planning electoral reforms on a national scale, the Congress(I) is also considering introducing a dose of democracy within its ranks. Again the battle-cry is 'party elections!' and it is beingled by Rajiv Gandhi whose first effort in this area came to a dead end in 1985 over enlistment of bogus members.

Under the old scheme a payment of Rs 25 made youa member. Money voting equalled numbers and Congress(I) politicos simply inflated the voter rolls by putting money in fictitious names. But in a recent highlevel confab. Rajiv has obtained support for ending this system. Under his new scheme, the Rs 25 fee will be



oth

Tai

done away with and instead block and district-level Con gressmen will be asked by enrol 25 new members each to vote for new office-bear democratic Hardly, say the critics. The Seem "activists", it appears, and being pre-selected by part bosses H.K.L. Bhagat al Balram Jakhar with just out qualification criterion: 0 alty to Rajiv.

#### TAIL PIECE

(Overheard)

If there had been a Ministry of Resignations in the Government of India, Ramakrishna Hegde would automatically have hopped into the Cabinet minister's seat. For a brief while only, of course, until he submitted his resignation.

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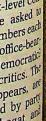
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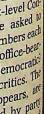
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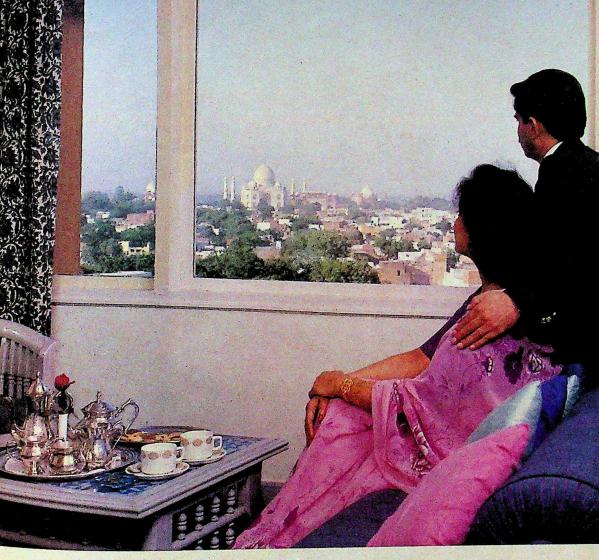












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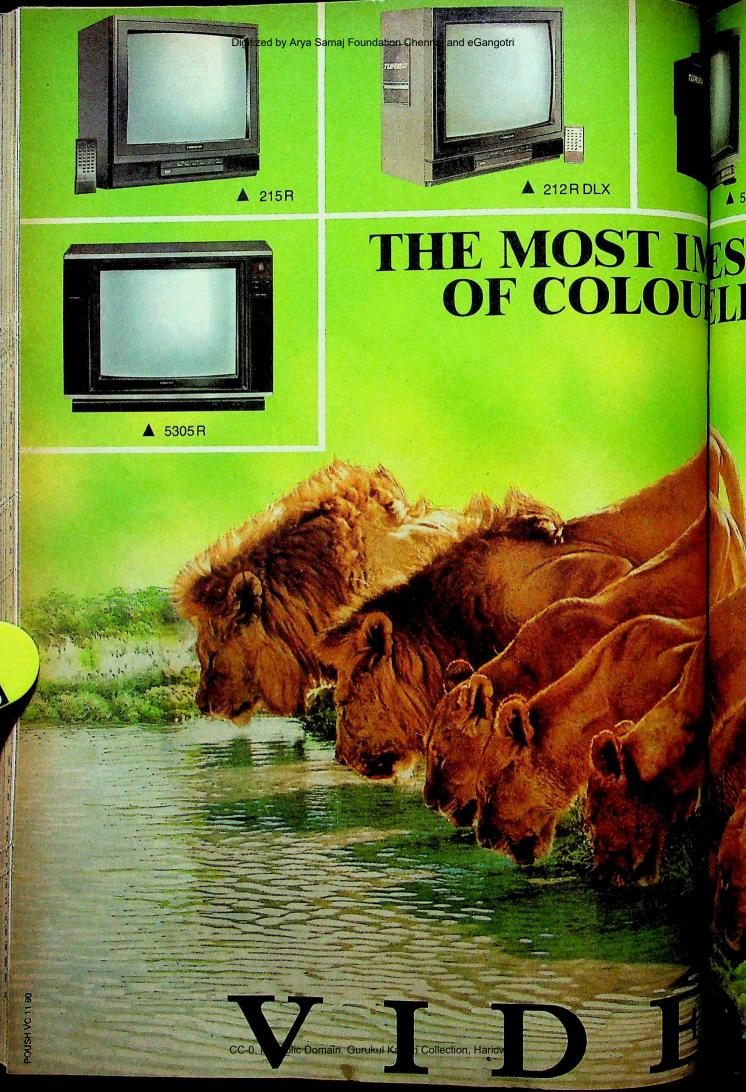
We like to think Shah Jehan would have been pleased.

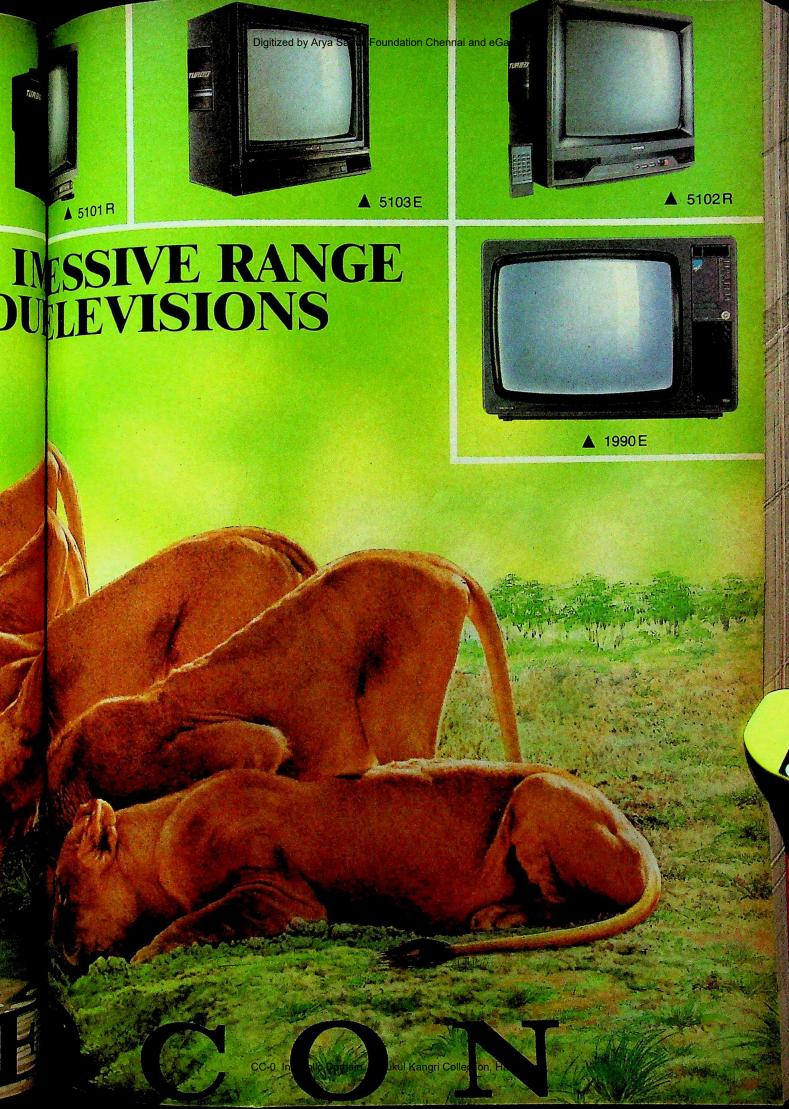


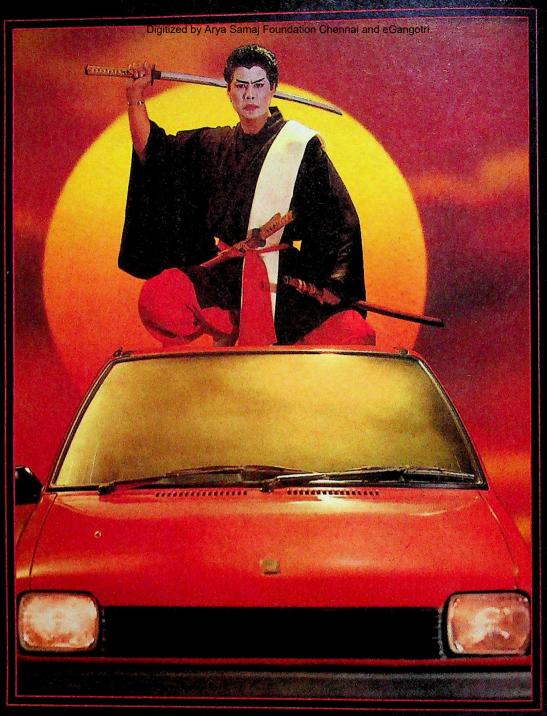




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- In the south where emphasis was not on Haryana but on Bofors, we lost badly.
- If there is any conflict between society and the Government on the Ram Januabhoomi temple it will give rise to the greatest mass movement in history.

   L.K. ADVANI, BJP president, in Panchjanya
- Riots are on the rise in the state after the National Front Government has come to power. The prime minister is responsible.
  - RAJIV GANDHI during his visit to Agra
- Let her (Maneka Gandhi) look after animals and zoos—wildlife is her subject—and let me look after the industrial growth of India.
  - NILAMANI ROUTRAY, Union minister for environment and forests
- The mistake made by the present Government was to scream from the roof-tops that all that the old government did was bad.
  - CHANDRA SHEKHAR, Janata Dal leader, on the National Front Government's performance in Kashmir and Punjab, in *The Times of India*
- If they (the Muslims) choose to live like Babars, we (the Hindus) shall become Shivajis and Rana Prataps.
  - UMA BHARATI, BJP MP, addressing the Virat Hindu Sammelan at Haridwar
- There's nothing wrong with my skin. Nobody can scrape it.
  - \*\*RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE, Planning Commission deputy chairman, when asked whether he was resigning to save his own skin, in The Statesman
- Don't start anything, because we will finish it.
  - GENERAL S.F. RODRIGUES, new army chief, warning the neighbouring countries against misadventures, in *Indian Express*
- Is the public sector anybody's father's property to be run so wastefully?

   RUSSI MODY, TISCO chairman, in The Sunday Observer
- I'm against politicians holding posts in sports bodies.
  - JAGDISH TYTLER, former Union minister and currently Judo
    Federation of India president, in Sportsworld
- opposition leader and make things so hot for him that he would go weepie all the time.

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#### MARRIAGE MANDI

■ If you happen to be a Maithil Brahmin living in Bihar's Darbhanga district you can shop for a bridegroom-literally. Just visit Sabha—a Saurath mandi of sorts-held every year during May-June and you'll see hordes of hopeful husbands lined up.



As many as 90 per cent of the region's Maithil Brahmin males find life partners at this marriage bazaar. With fathers in tow, the prospective bridegrooms strut around the mandi, readily striking a pose for interested buyers.

Their price? It varies, depending on their jobs (IAS officers are the costliest) and family back. ground. Some even carry placards quoting their price (read: dowry expected).

However, not everyitem is snapped up. There are many who haven't been sold despite sitting in the sabha for three consecutive years. Presumably, their prices have been slashed Any takers?

#### **SECURITY SNAFU**

■ Legislative proceedings in India have frequently generated fireworks. But all previous incidents were upstaged by a recent episode in the Maharashtra Legislative Council.

The debating elders were stunned when Pramod Navalkar, a Shiv Sena MLC,

suddenly whipped out a pistol. No, he wasn't a legislator-turned-terrorist. was his way of proving there was no security for the common man in the state. Brandishing the pistol, he thundered that if he could smuggle the firearm into the House, what security could the average citizens expect?

The colourful legisla-



often moves tor-who about in disguise-dropped another bombshell saying that if the security scenario didn't improve, he'd one day produce a bomb in the House. It is well-known that the Shiv Sena is gunning for the Sharad Pawar Government. But Navalkar's action has lent new meaning to the term.

#### DOUBLE TROUBLE

Obviously touched by the sun, some people in Delhi appear to be suffering from identity crises, leading to their impersonating Very Important Persons.

Most notable were two individuals-a telex operator and an anonymous caller. While the former



took it upon himself to play the Tau, the latter preferred the Mufti's role. For a while both played their parts to perfection, convincing even senior ministers.

Telexes were dispatched in the Tau's name and phone calls made in the Mufti's name. Convinced that the orders came from the highest offices in the

land, bureaucrats set about obeying them. But as the missives dealt with transfers of relatively junior officials-which neither the Tau nor the Mufti should be with-someconcerned body smelt a rat. Soon, the ghost writer and voice impersonator were found out

All good dramas must, after all, come to an end.

#### MILKY WAY

■ Bathing in milk may have been the secret of Cleopatra's legendary beauty but it doesn't seem to work with lesser mortals.

Consider the experience of a scribe who was cruising down the busy streets of the capital recently on his two-

wheeler. Suddenly, the gentleman in question was caught in a torrential downpour.

But wait—it wasn't rain that he was caught in but a deluge of milk streaming forth from a tanker that had suddenly fallen into a pot-hole.

Onlookers tried con-



vincing him that there wasn't much point in crying over spilt milk. But with his clothes ruined, our scribe wasn't mollified.

Whether the milk bath does wonders for his skin remains to be seen. But it certainly didn't go a long cleansing his way in temper.

#### **GOING FAST**

■ Go-slows are a common ploy used by workers to register their protest. But employees of the regional passport office in New Delhi came up with a "workhard" campaign to protest the Government's apathy in meeting their demands.



The result was hardly unwelcome: a record number of passports were issued during the campaign, cutting down the waiting period for applicants from 45 to about 30 days. And the workers' union backing the campaign claims that the waiting period could be reduced even further to just 10 days if more staff hired—one of the demands leading to the agitation in the first place.

So all citizens wishing to get their passports mal should make haste while the protest lasts, and before the passport office goes back to its usual contented by thargic self.

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UNION CABINET

## Unity in Disunity

They speak in a variety of voices and seem enveloped in confusion. But V.P. Singh's ministers, unlike their predecessors, can be certain they have a say in decision-making

Y conventional logic, this Union Cabinet should have been a tower of Babel. It has individuals with divergent views-free market advocates and socialists, kisans and mavericks-led by a man who often acts like a tactful referee rather than a captain.

And yet there is a method in the madness and the V.P. Singh Cabinet seems to be functioning as one in a democracy should.

For one, it meets regularly-every 10 days. And keen debates precede major decisions. "Ours is not a master-servant relationship," says External Affairs Minister Guiral. And Commerce Minister Arun Nehru asserts that "if any minister says he has not been consulted he is lying"

The Cabinet deliberations on the controversial new industrial policy best illustrate how it functions. Before the final policy was prepared by the Industry Ministry, several papers were preparedone by the Planning Commission, another by the Commerce Ministry, and

a draft by Montek Singh Ahluwalia, special secretary in the Prime Minister's Office (РМО). Also, Arun Nehru and Industry Minister Ajit Singh, had several meetings with Finance Minister Madhu Dandavate, a socialist, and put his misgivings to rest.

All this represents a total break from the past when ministers simply obeyed instructions from Rajiv or the PMO. Joint secretaries in the PMO could override even cabinet ministers.

But under the new dispensation, Montek Singh's paper suggesting changes in economic policy was discussed by various ministries as just another suggestion. As V.P. Singh said, when asked if the document had his approval: "If it had, it would have been

the industrial policy, not a draft paper."

In other words, policy-making has gone back to individual ministries. Perhaps the most significant matter the РМО handles by itself is the preparation of FIRs, mostly against V.P. Singh's favourite economic offenders. Con-

Cartoons by AJIT NINAN and PEALI GUPTA

Detached, democratic, more referee than captain

versely, the role of the Cabinet Secretariat as a coordinator between the ministries has been strengthened.

It is not as if the system works perfectly. Many ministers complain that secretaries are foisted on them. There are murmurs of protest against the ''takeover'' by the ''Allahabad Mafia'', a reference to the fact that Cabinet Secretary Vinod Pande and several other appointees to important positions are from the prime minister's home-town.

The decision-making also becomes hazy when it comes to political issues. On Kashmir, the Cabinet had heated discussions first on Jagmohan's appointment as governor and then his recall. There has been much talk of adopting a "political approach" but

little by way of clear thinking.

It is only occasionally that propri Lal Singh, who is generally content to a form appr the other way, insists on having his w whenever as in the decision to allow Amne motely co International to visit Kashmir and Pt the farme jab. Most cabinet ministers, include Once he wo

Gujral, had opposed it cabinet m

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Yet, so rarely does What is overrule his minist adult educ that no one can comple officials pro of interference from him in si In fact, Ajit Singh a back: "I th Dinesh Goswami por cation sho out: "Even if we approar available him occasionally w here." some problem he refu to intervene, saying it tion, Devi L for you to decide." the prices o

Still, some ministe Finance Se feel that V.P. Singh w have to start leading for chaste Hin the front or "the rug " What do ye be pulled out from und governmer our feet". The compute will be incre to carry the BJP and Left complicates matter procureme Whatever the glitches to Rs 140. ministers now cons dissent a fundament right and are unwilling give it up. So they happy to function as it viduals though, on the sis of their interests, st

of functioning, performance (or late it) and quirks, the Cabinet members be divided into the following by categories:

THE KISANS

**DEVILAL** Deputy Prime Minister and Agriculture SHARAD YADAV Textiles and Food Processing.

THEIRS is a classic love-hate relationship. farmers, no soft-drink g ites. And an ship. But they share a common into the well-being of the prosperous They speak a similar language, the

the tone is different; one is beligerent, the other mild. The first has turned the Agriculture Ministry a driving force for bian welfare. Under the stond, the Textiles Minkry, once almost exclurely concerned with making clamour fabrics and exports, now focuses on the rural artisan.

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At cabinet meetings, lly that Wevi Lal often emerges ontent to lo from apparent slumber aving his whenever a subject reow Amne motely connected with mir and Pr the farmer comes up. ers, includ Once he woke up during a opposed it cabinet meeting to ask: arely does! What is the budget for is minister adult education?" As the can completed officials present gaped at ice from his him in silence he shot t Singh a back: "I think adult eduswami por cation should be made we approar available to everyone

onally we here." At a meeting on market intervene, saying it tion, Devi Lal announced an increase in the prices of onions and potatoes. When ne ministrinance Secretary Bimal Jalan opposed hemove, Devi Lal retorted (in rude and leading had chaste Hindi): "Tujh ko kya maloom hai Whatdoyouknow?)Ours is a pro-kisan government. If I have said that the price will be increased, it will be." And it was. More recently, Devi Lal wanted the

Pocurement price of rice to be increased o Rs 140. Cabinet Secrelary Vinod Pande and Bimal Jalan accompanied by the Agriculture Secrelary S.K. Mishra (supposadly close to Devi Lal) went to explain to the minister that an increase would hike prices all dround, with the farmer being affected, Devi sent them packing. But eventually he agreed o a compromise.

Sharad Yadav is a bit dore of a contradiction. le is also fiercely proarmer. But he talks of the ultinational Pepsi with hesame passion as of proveaver schemes. He hasens to Point out that if he ssupporting Pepsi, it is for benefits flowing to armers not to support oft-drink guzzling urbanles. And anyway, he says,

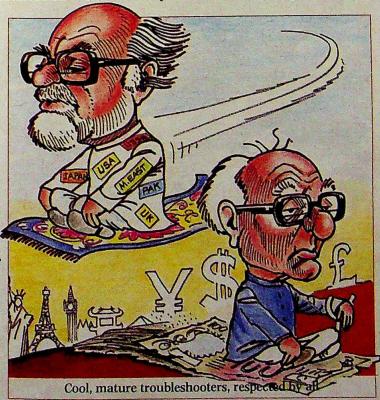


"I did not pass Pepsi myself you know, it was a cabinet decision."

#### THE WISE MEN

I.K. GUJRAL **External Affairs** MADHU DANDAVATE **Finance** 

THEY are the peace makers, tempering



debates and pacifying egos while advising restraint. Being above factional politics, they are deputed by V.P. Singh to tackle individuals hellbent on pursuing their own paths. Like Devi Lal. When he threatened to resign Gujral went to him. And without mentioning the resignation, pointed out that the country was facing external threats from across the border, and that if those in government didn't live up to their responsibility, the nation would spit on them. The argument worked.

Again, on the Chautala issue, Dandavate went to Devi Lal to persuade him to agree to his son's resignation. Devi Lal heard him out making it

clear that if anyone else had been sent he'd have thrown him out. And that he'd consider Dandavate's views knowing that he had no axe to grind.

Both Dandavate and Gujral are considered efficient ministers by bureaucrats. Both are articulate at cabinet meetings. Gujral says he has shifted the orientation of his ministry from glamour to serious business. He says he hasn't been over-ridden by Singh in any area, but that "whenever I have any

> apprehension (as in the case of Sri Lanka) I discuss it with him".

> Dandavate is more pressed for time. His bureaucrats' only criticism is that he is "a little too accessible". He is perhaps the only minister whose house is wide open without any security staff.

In trying to effect a break from the past, Dandavate says he has made it clear that he will not intervene in wars between industrial houses. and that financial institutions will not be allowed to act as industrial pawns.

Both ministers have intervened over Kashmir. When Jagmohan dissolved the Assembly without consulting the prime minister, the majority view in the Cabinet

favoured his immediate recall, V.P. Singh himself favoured this action, but his wise men advised restraint. On the issue of Chautala's resignation, too, many ministers felt it was time to break with Devi Lal. It was largely because of Dandavate and Gujral's intervention that a split was avoided.

#### THE IDEOLOGUES

GEORGE FERNANDES Railways K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN Surface Transport

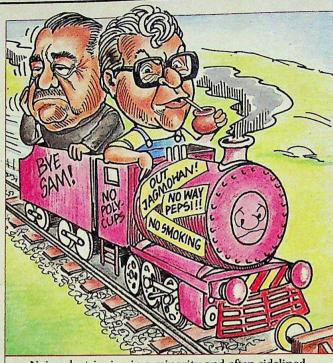
IN a world where leftist dogma is crumbling, Fernandes and Unnikrishnan hold firm. But while Fernandes still tries to

match his appearance and actions with the image of a 'socialist', Unnikrishnan appears to have given up the attempt somewhere along the line.

In a government where clear desks seem to be the hallmark, Fernandes stands out with a desk groaning under the weight of files. His bureaucrats say he is intelligent, efficient and grasps issues within seconds but that he is overworked. He agrees-but points out that despite the heavy load he has been able to change the railways'

attitude to favour the poor. Example: superfast 'elitist' trains will not be introduced. The manufacture of first class compartments has been stopped. Paper cups have been replaced with earthenware kulhads for serving tea. "Without spending a single paisa from our resources I have created jobs for 100,000 potters,' he says. Fernandes has also stopped Campa Cola being served on trains. "Nothing personal," he insists. "That fellow has encroached on railway land. He is a criminal and has to be treated as one.'

Fernandes sees himself as a "minority of one" in the Cabinet on most issues. About his short



Noisy, doctrinaire, in a minority and often sidelined

tenure as Kashmir Affairs minister he says: "I knew from the beginning that there would be resentment and hostility. The end was predictable.'

Unnikrishnan too had problems over the Sam Pitroda case when he was handling the Communications Ministry. His colleagues maintain that he had got "a little carried away". But sources close to him maintain he had been in close touch with the prime minister throughout and that the decision to take away the communications portfolio hadn't come as a surprise.

At cabinet meetings, Unnikrishnan is articulate on issues ranging from Kashmir to his own ministry, Punjab, Assam and Sri Lanka. His officials, however, are disappointed by his refusal to take quick decisions. He has been sitting on various files for several weeks, they say.

#### THE CORE GROUP

ARUN NEHRU Commerce and Tourism AJIT SINGH Industry ARIF M. KHAN Energy and Civil Aviation

IF there is any clear-cut group in the Cabinet, it is these three. They share a

right-of-centre viewpoint, function closely on economic and political matters, and support one another's decisions in the Cabinet. Nehru and Arifget together on political issues-whether in supporting Jagmohan or pressing for the recall of governor Nirmal Mukarji from Punjab. Ajit Singh is a valuable ally on economic matters.

Arun Nehru is emerging as the most efficient minister. His bureaucrats speak of his 'lightning speed' in clearing files and taking decisions. In the Cabinet, he speaks out louder than

most. He has had some differences with the prime minister whose style of functioning is often too indecisive for Nehru's liking. Nehru doesn't meet people, he meets political leaders. The story goes when an ordinary man from his constituency visits him, he is redirected to Arif's address.

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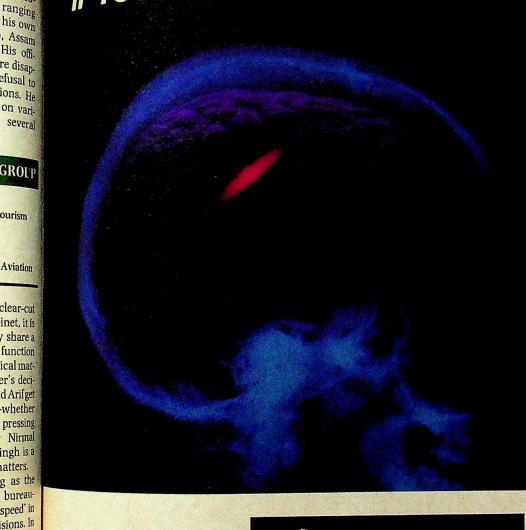
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Which is where Ari comes in. He is everyone's man courteous and po lite to a fault. In Parlia ment he stood in for sir ministers (while the were abroad) apart from handling his own depart ments. Now he is being called the minister for a affairs. "There were the Parliamen when I had a question hour every single day



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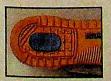
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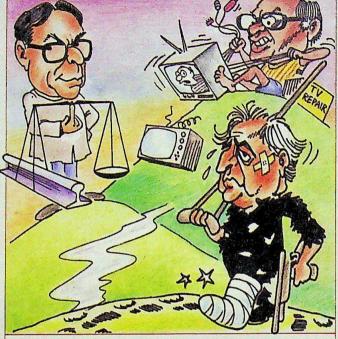
soles with an 'energy box' to absorb impact. CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Hariuway

CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul K

one or the other House," he says. The flip side of the overwork is the complaints from his officials. Says one: "He is distracted, has little time to clear files and is always surrounded by all kinds of hangers-on."

Ajit Singh is an anachronism. Of kisan pedigree. heis industry's man in the Cabinet. After a slow start he is being listed in the bureaucrats' list of efficient ministers. He too complains of overwork having to combine ministerial duties with political work. Unlike others he isn't worried by personnel changes in his ministry saving: "I couldn't care less who the secretary is. I'm only concerned with performance and that

they follow what I want them to do."



Aloof, individualistic, with mixed track records

#### THE LONERS

MUFTI M. SAYEED Home DINESH GOSWAMI Steel and Mines, and Law P. UPENDRA Information and Broadcasting

THEY work as individuals and aren't

part of any group. They judge issues on merit, not ideology.

Goswami and Upendra are vocal in the Cabinet. But the Mufti hasn't really got off the ground in his ministry. He has emerged as a home minister who can't see beyond Kashmir. He dashes to Srinagar every second day and comes back with an empty platter. V.P. Singh wanted contact to be established with Faroog Abdullah. The Mufti had reservations and sources in the ministry say he has never hesitated to say that Abdullah is irrelevant in the valley today.

In contrast, Dinesh Goswami, the Asom Gana Parishad's representative in the Cabinet, is an effi-

cient minister. His officials describe him as "honest and dedicated". He said he wouldn't appoint any Supreme Court judge who hadn't been recommended by the chief justice and that no judge would be transferred without the recommendation of the chief justice.

Then there is P. Upendra, always in the public eye and always a subject of controversy. He hasn't been able to introduce much change in the electronic media. Says one official: "The minister isn't even subtle about it now."

The Telugu Desam's sole voice in

Cabinet, Upendra the tends to often bandy about technicalities. For instance, at a political meeting when he recently accompanied the prime minister to Allahabad, he concerned himself solely megawatts with transmission losses.

#### FENCE SITTERS

RAM VILAS PASWAN Labour and Welfare M.S. GURUPADASWAMY Petroleum and Chemicals NATHU RAM MIRDHA Food and Civil Supplies NILAMANI ROUTRAY **Environment and Forests** MURASOLI MARAN Urban Development

THEIR ministries' functioning has been lacklustre, their contribution to cabinet meetings limited. Their officials are indifferent. None of them can complain of overwork.

Paswan, articulate in his opposition days, is a disappointment. A cabinet colleague remembers him at meetings only because he 'sirs' V.P. Singh every time he opens his mouth.

Gurupadaswamy, in his own colleagues' estimation, is a 'disaster'. His files gather dust. The story goes that when he wanted to go to Brazil, he asked his staff to find out the name of

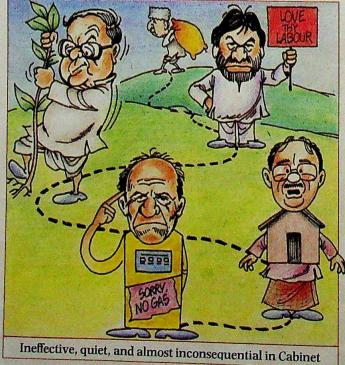
the Brazilian prime minister (Brazil does not have a prime minister). Needless to say, the trip didn't materialise.

Nathu Ram Mirdhais more vocal. But a colleague observes: speaks a lot but I cannot say he speaks sense. Nilamani Routray's claim to fame is Maneka Gandhi. He was brought in to curtail her and has done so efficiently. His own performance elicits a 'no comment' from an official in his ministry. That leaves Murasoli Maran. nondescript who would have remained unknown if he hadn't the task residen. allotting of accommodation tial to MPs.

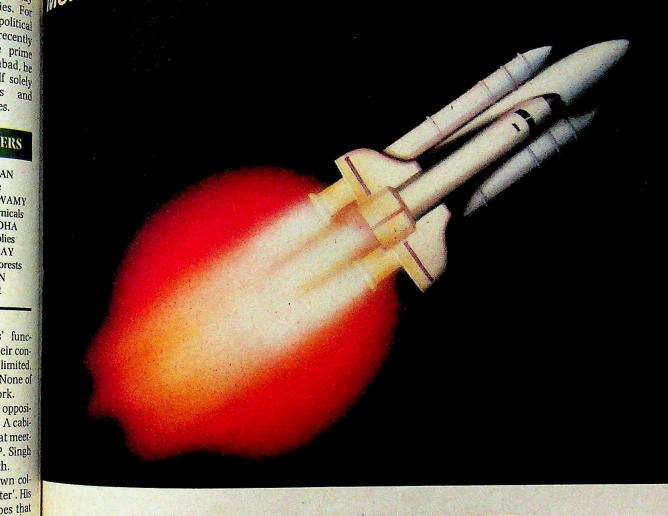
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—SEEMA MUSTAFA



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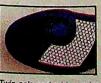
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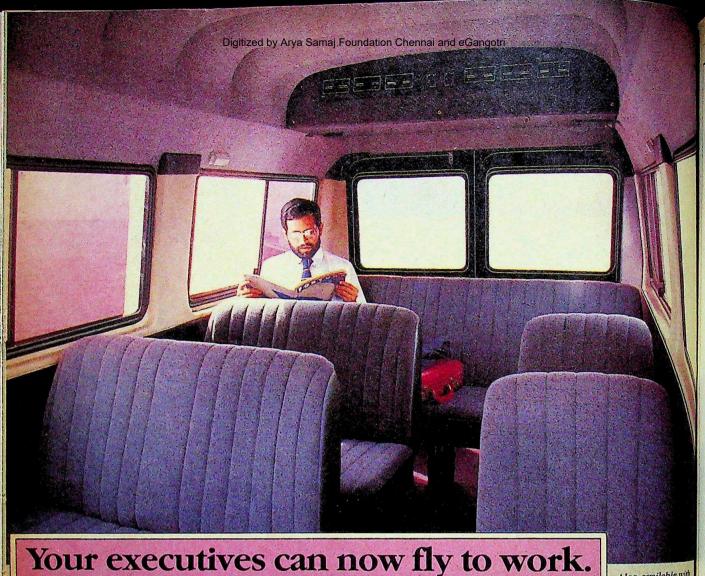
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RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE

## Beaten into Retreat

Hegde's fifth resignation in as many years has invoked little sympathy, as his role in many scandals has undermined his claim to 'value-based politics'.

IVE years ago he was projected as the only other Mr Clean of Indian politics. After Raiiv Condition is. In fact, his admirers genuinely believed that he was the only serious challenger to Rajiv's mystical TINA (There-Is-No-Alternative) factor. But last fortnight, when Ramakrishna Hegde, the suave and urbane deputy chairman of the Planning Commission bowed out of office, not a tear was shed.

His was an ignominious exit. Made even more so by open jubilation not only in the Karnataka unit of the Janata Dal but even among senior party leaders, one of whom termed the event as "one more defeat for the politics of gimmickry within our party". It was Hegde's fifth resignation

in as many years. And this time too, he attempted to dress it in the garb of selfsacrifice to uphold the highest moral principles in politics.

But his detractors within and outside his party were willing to call a spade a spade: he had resigned to ward off a major embarrassment to himself and the National Front Government. Said V.N. Gadgil, the Congress(I) general secretary and official spokesman: "It's now been proved beyond doubt that Hegde has always been hiding his crimes be-

hind high sounding principles of value-based politics." Added a Janata Dal office-bearer in Karnataka: "His Political bluff has finally been called. He never realised that he can't fool all the people all the time.'

As Hegde again came under micro-Scopic scrutiny, his report card showed that he that he was perhaps the only national figure in the country to have been implicated in over a dozen scandals in less than six years while he was chief minister. And he has created history by resigning or threatening to do so each time a scandal erupted.

Hegde's latest and, what most

legde had been under pressure to quit. The Kuldip Singh **Commission Report** was the last straw.

observers conclude, final resignation, was precipitated by the Kuldip Singh Commission report. The commission was appointed in June 1989 to inquire into charges that when Hegde was chief minister, the Karnataka Government had engineered the allotment of

prime land to an NRI association at throw away prices (see box). Hegde had, at first, welcomed the appointment of the commissionproclaiming no wrongdoing was involved-but when the report was submitted, began questioning the judge's motive and background. Says Hegde: "Just because I didn't take action, I am being blamed for the land deal.' Retorts Ramesh Chennithala, Youth Congress(I) president: "But he himself demanded the judicial inquiry. The Union Government only accepted his advice.'

Hegde had gambled and it didn't pay off. The commission has held that

the chief minister's office had taken special interest in the land allotment. As in the past, Hegde could have survived this scandal too if the political configurations within the Janata Dal were not adverse to him. For ultimately, Hegde's resignation had less to do with the merits of the Kuldip Singh Commission report—which is

yet to be accepted by the Government-than with the hostility he faced within the Janata Dal.

The straws were clearly in the wind. Even though the report was submitted on June 25, it was considered for the first time by the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA) on July 1. Though not a CCPA member, Union Law Minister Dinesh Goswami was asked to attend the meeting as a special invitee as one of the report's

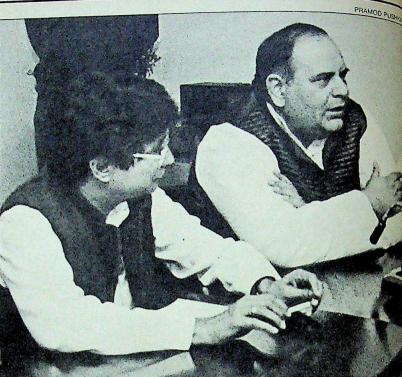
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four copies had earlier been given to him. Others present at the half-hourlong meeting in the prime minister's South Block office were Finance Minister Madhu Dandavate, Commerce Minister Arun Nehru, External Affairs Minister Inder Gujral and Industry Minister Ajit Singh. After the main points of the report had been read out, V.P. Singh, as always, remained neutral. Nehru and Ajit Singh recommended that Hegde be asked to quit while Gujral defended him on technical grounds. In the absence of any clear opinion by Goswami, the CCPA decided to meet again that evening.

Barring Dandavate who had to leave for Bombay, all the others were present at the next meeting when the prime minister announced that a letter from Hegde was expected shortly. What arrived was not a letter but five sealed envelopes addressed to all the members. Each contained a 10-page defence; only V.P. Singh's envelope had an extra piece of paper-Hegde's resignation offer. The majority view was that there was enough ammunition in the report to be used against the party if Hegde was allowed to continue and that the Government would face a major embarrassment if it failed to table the commission report in Parliament during the monsoon session.

The Ajit Singh-Arun Nehru combine that took this view was determined to see Hegde out of office. But V.P. Singh



suggested that the report be referred to the Department of Personnel for specific recommendations. The prime minister had reason to defer the resignation as Hegde had stood by him in all the battles against Devi Lal and Chandra Shekhar. His hands were, however, tied as the demand for Hegde's removal was mounting within the party. So when Hegde-in what he thought was a shrewd move in

Ajit Singh and Nehru: calling the she

reverse psychology-wrote yet anoth Hegde's hi letter pleading that his resignation accepted, V.P. Singh promptly did "with regret".

There were many reasons Hegde's exit remaining unmount Ever since his appointment as depr chairman of the Planning Commission a powerful section of the Janata Dall

STYLE FOR SCANDAL

Arrack Bottling Contract Scandal: The case that almost brought the Hegde government down



began in 1984. Shortly before the general elections, the state Government invited applications for arrack bottling contracts worth about Rs 55 crore. Eight of the 131 applications were chosen; those rejected went to the high court. The court in February 1986 declared that the awarding of the contracts "smacks of arbitrariness and is a flagrant violation of the rule of law". Hegde resigned, but resumed office within 11 days "bowing to the wishes of his party colleagues".

The NRI Land Scandal: Surfaced in February 1988. According to opposition leaders, the Bangalore Development Authority



sold 110 acres of land worth Rs 130 crore to an NRI housing association for a mere Rs 2.2 crore. The association was a front of a benami organisation based in Dubai. The association began road construction. Hegde's defence was that the society was never given the land. But official records

show the Hegde gord ment changed its house priorities to make the al ment. After the expose, sympathet land deal fell through.

Land Scandal; In I cember 1988, Hegde accused of favouring ap erful group of people, ind ing a famous Karnali based builder, C.L. Sha by converting a 67-acr into a lucrative commo property. The land was only exempted from the ban Land Ceiling Ad was also sold to two owned by the Khodays cording to the document circulated by a social nisation, dividend wan of the Khoday Dist were given to five me of Hegde's family. The was cleared in the

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Medica Scandal: I opposition Subbiah Hegde's hawkin'g se cal college



bell arguing that since the party sufbell alguing in the assembly and Lok Sabba elections in Karnataka, Hegde had no real power base and should not kgyven such an important portfolio at the expense of others.

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In a sense, Hegde had wielded the batchet against himself. First, he had denated his own Janata faction by ssociating himself with those who bodied the Bommai government in Karnataka. Besides, Devi Lal, Ajit Singh and the Jan Morcha faction have always considered him a threat because of his fund-raising ability, his access to the top thelons, and the political savvy with which he can easily overshadow other kaders. Among the early salvos fired at him was one by Om Prakash Chautala iread Devi Lal) who called for Hegde's resignation after a parliamentary committee indicted him last month for his role in the telephone tapping scandal.

And during the last several weeks Hegde alienated even more partymen by goading his supporters in the Planning Commission to interfere in the affairs of various ministries and the party. Hegde's high media profile riled many cabinet ministers, and some even felt that he was behaving like an alternative prime minister.

Last fortnight, for example, Rajni unmount Kothari, a Hegde protege in the Planent as deplaing Commission, openly criticised the Government's industrial policy. Earlier, anata Dalt LC. Jain, another member, resigned



Inder Gujral was the only cabinet minister to defend Hegde on technical grounds.

from the commission in protest against the Meham violence-inviting Devi Lal's wrath. And Gujarat Chief Minister Chimanbhai Mehta recently sent a letter to the prime minister complaining that a senior Planning Commission member had written to him threatening to exclude the Narmada project from the eighth plan if the demands for rehabilitation of the displaced persons were not met immediately. Hegde has defended

such conduct by saying: "As party vicepresident and deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, I have a right to give my opinion on matters of national importance."

If Hegde's relations with his own partymen had, soured, they were no better with Janata Dal's allies. Hegde had, for instance, annoyed the BJP by refusing to make seat adjustments in the national and state elections.

Still, Hegde has something in common with Chandra Shekhar-his onetime mentor. Power base or no power base, allies or no allies, he is not one to accept defeat easily. Even as the Kuldip Singh Commission was turning on the heat, Hegde tried to patch up with Devi Lal—with whom he spent several hours at the Bangalore nature cure centre where the Jat had been taking rejuvenation therapy. The Tau mellowed somewhat and issued some pro-Hegde statements, in one of which he said that Hegde should not have resigned. But Hegde's attempt to make amends came far too late.

Now even Hegde's supporters believe he must start from scratch-go back to the people of Karnataka and campaign among them, even if that means making the commission report a political issue. But if the recent electoral verdicts from Karnataka are any indication, Hegde would have to strive hard to begin his comeback.

-PRABHU CHAWLA

egde gord serious objections because d its how Hegde had directed the application be "considered sympathetically".

Medical College Seats Scandal: In October 1985, ndal: In l pposition leader A.K. ubbiah charged that legde's relations lawking seats in the mediwere colleges. He produced



documents, including an FIR, to buttress his charge. After initial disclaimers, Hegde instituted a probe. Three judges quit it for various reasons. But Justice P. Dayal, inquiring into corruption charges against Hegde's son and nephew, will submit his report by August 30. Being probed is the allegation of a Coorgi coffee-planter, that in 1988 the duo cheated him of Rs 2.50 lakh by promising him an MD seat for his daughter.

Telephone Tapping Scandal: It erupted in August 1988, when Indian Express put out a story based on the telephone conversation between the Janta Party chief and the local Janata H.D. leader Deve Gowda. Since the script



came from a phone tap, the Congress(I) at the Centre pounced on it to trap Hegde. Soon, all national dailies carried a photostat copy of an order by then special 1G of police, M.S. Raghuraman, authorising the tapping of important leaders' phones. Hegde disclaimed knowledge of it. But the evidence presented to the parliamentary committee and the state legislature proved Hegde had approved the order.

Revajeetu Land Scandal: The Congress(I) and Hegde's political rivals alleged that Hegde's relatives had cornered a prime piece land in Bangalore through a firm called Revajeetu Builders. Shobha Makhija, sister of Hegde's son-in-law, Manu Nichani, was one of the partners in the firm. The inquiry ordered by the then revenue minister S.R. Bommai had revealed that the property was grossly undervalued to evade stamp duty. He ordered the prosecution of the original plot owners but no action was taken against Makhija. Very little known about the case now.



Patwa drives the prime minister to the Kukreshwar function: inviting tumble

SUNDERLAL PATWA

## Squandering a Mandate

With a series of blunders, in four short months the Madhya Pradesh chief minister h painted himself into a corner by antagonising partymen and the people alike.

HE BJP had pinned great hopes on its chief ministers who took charge in three states barely four months ago; they were expected to set new standards and show the nation that the BJP can better the rule of centrist parties.

But at least one party chief minister appears to be falling far short of that great expectation: Sunderlal Patwa in Madhya Pradesh is today in the process of squandering away a huge mandate faster than anyone would have thought possible.

The 65-year-old Patwa is a man under siege-laid by none other than his own partymen. Ask a BJP man about their chief minister and chances are they'd say: he can write a treatise on how to make enemies and lose friends; power has gone to his head: he is a captive chief minister whose government is run through remote control by a powerful coterie; or he forgotten the art of smiling.

Patwa has little to smile about, hel only himself to blame. For since assuing office he has committed one blun after another and shown no fine

whatsoever in tacklings litically tricky issues.

One mistake Patwa is surely ruc was organising a function at Kukreshwar, his his town in Mandsaur trict, on June 15 to 10 the sixth death anni sary of his otherwise known father, Mann Patwa. Though it W private function, not was the entire state

#### THE BIG BLUNDERS

- Inviting ministers and the prime minister to a private function, leading to charges of misuse of public office.
- Divesting key leaders of important portfolios, resulting in the creation of a dissident lobby.
- Large-scale transfer of government staff and a big antiencroachment drive, triggering off wide resentment.
- Backing an unprecedented resolution passed by the state Assembly calling for the scrapping of Article 370. CC-0. In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

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pelpresent, but even the prime minister perpresented to take time off to attend. The galaxy of politicians blurred the between a private and public funcand the Congress(I) moved an adour and the state Assembly lleging "massive misuse of official machinery". But what proved more damaging for Patwa was the attack Jaunched by Swadesh, a pro-BJP daily published and edited by Rajendra Sharma. In a front-page editorial the daily charged Patwa with misusing offiial machinery for a purely personal function and compared his moral standards with those of "Haryana's Chautalas and Chaudharys". "The family function", commented the hard-hitting ediorial, "has given an opportunity to the people to point an accusing finger at the BJP and now their leaders will have to spend considerable time explaining their position". The editorial said such criticism had been necessitated by the need to ensure that the sacrifices, efforts and sweat of thousands of BJP workers were not washed away by someone's arbitrariness. It asserted that if the leadership did not put a check on such misuse of power, the future of the BJP did not seem very bright.

The editorial created a minor sensation; as the daily is pro-вјр it was seen as evidence of Patwa's weakening position in the party. And Patwa only made matters worse for himself by writing a five-page rejoinder in which he argued that having spent years in public life he had developed personal equations with VIPs. "I fail to understand what crime Ive committed by inviting the prime minister, Mrs Vijaya Raje Scindia and other dignitaries," he wrote. While Patwa had every right to defend himself, hestooped low when he alleged that the editorial was an attempt to pressure him into giving Swadesh more advertisements. Addressing Sharma, the chief minister wrote: "Maybe I could not fulfil your expectations," and then went on to give details of how the editor aproached him and other party leaders ads and help in launching new editions. In an equally harsh reply, Sharma said his editorial reflected the opinion of lakhs of BJP workers.

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This was not the first time that Swadesh had taken Patwa to task. Just a ew days earlier it had criticised his reallocation of portfolios, in the course of which Patwa had divested his key rivals of important ministries on the pretext of giving them "more important assignthends, or "reducing their workload". Though the ministers were shown their place, in the process the chief minister created a powerful dissident lobby overnight. And the dissidents had a rallying point in Kailash Joshi, the senior most BJP leader in the state who has been opposing Patwa's leadership from the very beginning.

ITH senior ministers ganging up against him, it is only natural that ordinary BIP members should be emboldened to criticise the chief minister in public and party forums. Their biggest grouse is against what they describe as a sudden change in Patwa's personality. Since he became

atwa is continuing with the anti-encroachment drive despite criticism even from BIP members. pendent on a section of the BJP high command that backed his chief ministership. Patwa's key patrons in the BJP are Kushabhau Thakre-considered the patriarch of the party's Madhya Pradesh unit-S.C. Angre, the political aide of BJP Vice-President Vijaya Raje Scindia, and Kailash Sarang, the party's state treasurer. All of them are quick to rise to Patwa's defence. ("He is active, polite, friendly and social," says Sarang, while Thakre maintains that "there is no dissent. The press is just short of vocabulary".) Patwa, expectedly, denies any dependence on a coterie and says: "Even if I ask Thakreji about something, he tells me 'you do it, it's your job'.

Apart from alienating partymen. Patwa has also frittered away considerable goodwill by making a number of controversial decisions. One is the largescale transfer of government employees. While the Government claims 40,000 have been transferred, unofficial estimates put the number at 80,000-a new record in a state already notorious for its flourishing transfer industry. Thousands of government employees



Anti-encroachment drive in Bhopal: unpopular moves

chiefminister, they complain, the polite, jovial Patwa has been replaced by a rude and unapproachable man. Patwa, of course, denies undergoing any personality change and says there is not a single party worker who has complaints on this score.

Another criticism of Patwa is that he is a puppet chief minister, unable to take independent decisions, and totally deare understandably livid and even some ruling party members are critical of the move. S.C. Verma, a BJP MP from Bhopal, for example, points to the financial implications of large-scale transfers.

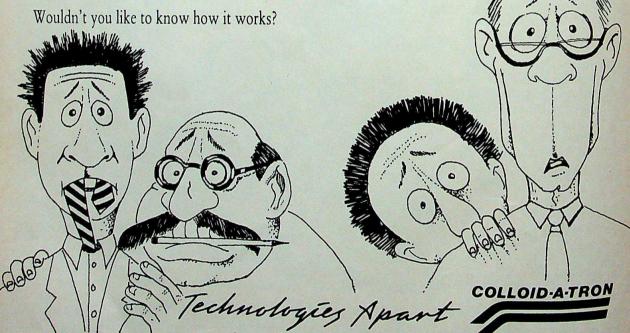
Another unpopular decision is Patwa's anti-encroachment drive-the biggest ever launched by a government in the state. With thousands of hutments demolished, most BIP-admin-

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istered towns look like war-zones. Touring the state. Union Finance Minister Madhu Dandavate described the devastation as "worse stribed the devastation as "worse than Turkman Gate". Despite all potential parties opposing the drive, the Patwa Government is going ahead with it. But Law Minister Babulal Gaur, who has been nicknamed Bulldozer Lal, for initiating the drive, claims that the majority of the people are happy, and it is only a handful that are affected.

Capping all these controversial moves was the passing of a resolution by the state Assembly calling for the grapping of Article 370 that confers special status on Jammu & Kashmir. The Congress(I) member who moved the resolution, was suspended from the Congress(I) Legislature Party for doing so, and the BJP which has a two-thirds majority was the only party to vote in its favour.

In backing the unprecedented resolution, Patwa was clearly playing to





Sharma and Joshi are spearheading the attack against Patwa.

the RSS gallery. But though his stand may have warmed the hearts of fundamentalist Hindus, the minorities are feeling distinctly insecure under his rule. They have good cause for concern-Patwa recently called Christian missionaries "traitors" and soon after, in a highly provocative speech, criticised all Muslims opposing the construction of the Ram Janmabhoomi temple. Patwa's remarks, in fact, led to the Governor Mehmood Ali Khan, sending him an official note on the issue. And last fortnight, the chief minister reportedly transferred the collector of Khargone because he refused to demolish the minaret of a masjid in the course of the antiencroachment drive. Earlier Patwa had changed the director general of police because he refused to bring back three town inspectors transferred from Indore for their role in communal riots.

All in all, Patwa's four month stint has been a passage from strength to weakness, marked at every step by blunders. The chief minister's honeymoon has clearly been a very short and unhappy one.

—N.K. SINGH

MINISTERIAL ASSETS

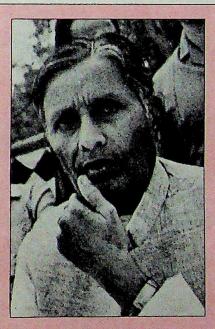
### **Coming Clean**

HIEF Minister Sunderlal Patwa's biggest single achievement so far is to have got his ministers to declare their assets. Last fortnight, he tabled a 106-page statement in the Assembly.

This healthy precedent is in sharp contrast to the behaviour of Congress(I) leaders. A classic example is MPCC(I) chief Arjun Singh, who had to quit as chief minister last year following a high court verdict that he "owes an explanation to the nation" for not declaring his assets. Singh retorted, saying: "I have explained everything to the Income Tax Department. I will not disclose my assets to anyone else as a matter of principle."

The list of assets of Patwa and his 26 ministers reveals that except for one or two, all are well-off. The poorest seems to be Minister of State for Labour, Lilaram Bhojwani, a former newsagent who has no immovable property.

Sunderlal Patwa has two plots in Bhopal, four hectares of irrigated farmland, Rs 68,830 in banks, shares worth Rs 2.29 lakh, 22 tolas of gold and 500 gm of silver. He also has a one-sixth share in four an-



Patwa: commendable act

cestral houses.

Water Resources Minister Shitala Sahay has three houses, two plots in Gwalior, Rs 1.1 lakh in banks, 20 tolas of gold, 50 tolas of silver and a car.

Finance Minister Ramhit Gupta has two houses, 35 acres of farmland, one plot in Bhopal, Rs 1.35 lakh in banks, shares worth Rs 90,000, 40 tolas of gold and 2 kg of silver.

Co-operatives Minister Laxminarayan Sharma has one house and

an 8,000-sq ft plot in Bhopal, 16 acres of irrigated land, Rs 1.18 lakh in a Bhopal hotel, 25 tolas of gold, 400 gm silver, a jeep and a tractor.

Law Minister Babulal Gaur has two houses and one plot in Bhopal, 15 bighas of land in joint property, Rs 36,000 in banks, 15 tolas of gold and 3 kg of silver.

Tribal Welfare Minister Baliram Kashyap has three houses and one plot, 52 acres offarmland, 50 acres in joint property, 150 gm of gold, 150 tolas of silver, cattle and a jeep.

Revenue Minister Laxminarayan Gupta has three houses, 20 bighas of farmland, Rs 40,000 in banks, 100 gm of gold and 5 kg of silver.

Minister of State for Public Health Engineering Dhyanendra Singh has 21.5 bighas of land, one plot, Rs 3.8 lakh in banks, Rs 48,000 invested in a firm, 358 shares in some blue chip companies, 50 tolas of gold, 5 kg of silver, precious stones set in gold (numbers not given), a car and a jeep. He also has a one-sixth share in ancestral property consisting of 12 acres of farmland, one big house, 10 tolas of gold and 5 kg of silver.

So far, so good. The test, opposition leader S.C. Shukla has declared, will come after five years: when it is seen whether the ministers have enriched public life or only themselves.

—N.K. SINGH

BIHAR

### **Tough Tack**

#### Yadav mounts a crackdown



WHETHER in government or out of it, Laloo Prasad Yadav appears to live by the dictum that attack is the best form of defence. His grounding as a JP

movement activist and his years spent as an opposition leader who launched scathing attacks on the Government have left their mark, and today Yadav is something of an oddity as a chief minister: instead of defending the system, he continues to be one of its bitterest critics. As he himself admits: "I still feel that I am fighting against a chief minister, against a corrupt system, like a student leader.'

By the time Yadav had completed 100 days in office last month, as many as 300 employees of the state secretariat in Patna had been suspended for absenteeism or negligence of duties. And it was Yadav himself who had been busy hauling up the employeesthe chiefminister would suddenly dash out of his office in the state secretariat to conduct an unscheduled check on some department, go through the attendance registers, do a head count to find out how many employees were "missing", order the departmental head to "take action against them, even suspend them", and rush on to conduct a surprise raid on the next department.

The upshot is that for the first time the babus of the state secretariat have begun to reach their offices on time. Says a senior bureaucrat: "Ever since Yadav became chief minister the entire secretariat looks like the headquarters of a students movement.'

There is an element of truth in that statement. For like Yadav, many of his close associates are former student leaders who spearheaded Jayaprakash Narayan's "total revolution" in the '70s. As many as 50 Janata Dal legislators and about 40 MPs from Bihar are former JP movement activists. And though their assimilation into mainstream politics has undoubtedly diluted the idealism, catchwords of yesteryears like "eradicating corruption" and "building a new Bihar" are again gaining currency in the state. As Yadav says: "We have been fighting against the corrupt system for all these years and now since we have at last got





Yadav inspects a government hospital: and consoles caste riot victims

this chance we must do it. People must be convinced that we are not only honest but mean business as well." Jagtanand, another JP movement activist who is now minister for irrigation and power, echoes the prevailing sentiment: "We are fighting the last battle. Either we will finish the rot or we will be

finished.'

The Yadav Government has certainly broken new ground in trying to loosen the stranglehold of the bureaucracy on the state. For the first time, powerful IAS officers are being held accountable in Bihar; last fortnight the state Vigilance Department lodged a criminal case against two senior IAS men-former education commissioner R.S. Tiwary and former director of primary education Ram Shringar Singh-and two private firms for financial bungling to the tune of Rs 2 crore in the 'Operation Blackboard'

scheme of the Education Department.

Besides, the Vigilance Department

has conducted 70 raids on the homesof

senior officials, in the course of whichit unearthed unaccountable cash and assets worth Rs 10 crore. Following the raids, influential individuals-like the University Service Commission Chairman R.K. Poddar and Bihar Madarsa Education Board Chairman Moham-

med Yunus Hakim-were arrested Says Jabir Hussain, a close associate of the late Jayaprakash Narayan: "This government will definitely be able to achieve something because it has no compulsions or weaknesses vis-a-vis the bureaucracy against which it is

going ruthlessly."

But there is always a possibility that taking on Bihar's all-powerful bureaucracy may boomerang of Yadav. Particularly since he over stepped the limit when he allowed Minister Affairs Parliamentary Raghunath Jha to read out in the Assembly the names of 31 IAS officers against whom vigilance inquiries were on. This was done despite the Vigilance categorically Department having asked the Government not to reveal the names as in most of the cases no even the preliminary inquiries had been completed. To make matter worse, some of the officers had been exonerated while there was not even prima facie case against others. Saida IAS official: "Anger among bureau crats means non-cooperation which would ultimately lead to the collapse the minority Government. Instead taking his officials into confidence, the chief minister is busy running the down publicly.'

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Bureaucrats are not the only ones being given such treatment by the abrasive chief minister. His pulling up of doctors and medical staff-after unscheduled raids on government hospitals-attracted great media attention in the state. But when Yadav queued up at the Patna Medical College Hospital with his sick one-and-ahalf year old son, Tarun, last fortnight-though he could have summoned the best medical attention to his son's bedside-it became clear that he lived by the same set of principles he expected others to adhere to. The chief minister waited for a good two hours for his turn to come and it was only on being told that the necessary medicines were not available that he went to a private physician.

The chief minister's critics, of course, dismiss his actions as nothing more than cheap gimmicks. The irrepressible former chief minister Jagannath Mishra dismisses Yadav's adherence to JP's principles as a big hoax. Sayshe: "When they did not care for JP during his lifetime, what will they do now? Everybody knows that JP died a painful death in 1979 after the dismal performance of the Janata government." Adds Congress(I) Kamalnath Singh Thakur. "Running the administration is a serious business, but Yadav wants to solve all problems through gimmicks. All the activities of the Yadav Government so far have been peripheral, just confined to the secretariat.

Still, considering that Yadav is heading a minority government, it is commendable that he should take any action at all. For aside from coming down with a heavy hand on corrupt and irresponsible officials, Yadav has also won accolades for being the first to reach trouble spots and for handling the communal situation firmly.

But though he may have won public approval, his political troubles are mounting—the BJP has threatened to withdraw support to his government and rivals for the chief ministership from within the Janata Dal keep rearing their heads.

Should Yadav display the skills necessary to keep a minority government afloat, he could turn out to be one of the most able chief ministers the state has had in recent times. For he has already shown the political will to crackdown on corruption and inefficiency. Such success, if it comes, will have most of the country's political pundits, who gave him no chance, eating their words.—FARZAND AHMED

YOUTH CONGRESS(I)

#### On the Road

#### A return to agitations

HEN out of power, hit the road. This seems to be the abiding principle of the Congress(I). The memories of Sanjay Gandhi's storm-troopers during the 1977-79 Janata Party rule have not yet faded from the public mind. Once again in the Opposition, the party is conjuring up visions of the Sanjay brigade in a new avatar—the Youth Congress(I).

The very first act of Ramesh Chen-

is stalking the streets. Since the much publicised lathi-charge incident, the youths have protested at Prime Minister V.P. Singh's residence at least thrice on extremely flimsy pretexts. The latest occasion was to protest the Government's decision to lift the ban on the human rights watchdog Amnesty International's entry into the country.

The organisation has chalked out its agitational programme and prepared an aggressive charter of demands. It will observe August 1 as its demand day by holding mass rallies throughout the country. That could well mark the kick-off of a new phase of agitational politics. Says Chennithala:

SHARAD SAVEN



nithala, MP from Kerala, after he was appointed president of the Youth Congress(I) was to demonstrate before the prime minister's residence on the Meham issue. During the demonstration the police were provoked to resort to a lathi-charge. The picture of Chennithala lying in hospital with his leg bandaged was splashed in the dailies. The exact nature of his injury became a controversy, but his purpose was served: the Youth Congress(I) had refurbished its militant image.

Last fortnight during a one-to-one meeting with Congress(I) President Rajiv Gandhi, Chennithala got his brief: reorganise the youth body for the forthcoming struggle and get aggressive. The militant Sanjay brigade, in other words, is being revived. Rajiv, while addressing a Youth Congress(I) convention recently exhorted them to resort to wide-scale agitations and mass demonstrations.

At a time when the parent party is yet to get over its gloom, its junior wing

#### **Demonstration against Amnesty**

"I have sought an appointment with the prime minister to submit our demands. But mere talking will not do. We have to give this government a rude jolt, we will raise every issue affecting the masses."

Chennithala has the sanction of the party elders for dabbing the war paint. Says AICC(I) spokesman V.N. Gadgil: "The Congress youth wing has a particular role to play. When we are in the Opposition the organisation has to ventilate the people's grievances. The spokesman reaffirms that Rajiv Gandhi's remarks at the youth conference, assigning them a militant role. were not off-the-cuff, and not without the approval of the party leadership Says Gadgil: "The young by natureart aggressive, their mental make-up is action oriented." The question, however is when the state of ever, is whether the people willendorse the brand of politics such aggression -BHASKAR ROY can produce.

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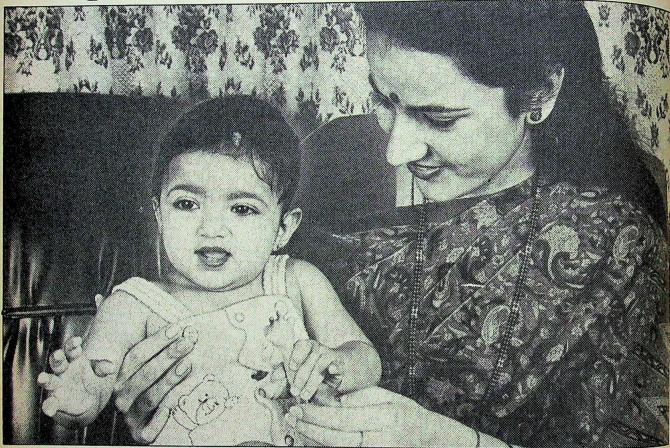




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## Absence Anarchy

### With Chenna Reddy away, dissidence mounts



CHIEF ministers who go away to the US for long-drawn medical treatment seem to meet with singular bad luck in Andhra Pradesh. The first at-

tempt by the Congress(I) to dislodge Telugu Desam supremo N.T. Rama Rao was made in 1984 when he was away to the US for cardiac surgery. Though he recovered the chief ministership within a month, the murky episode proved a set-back for democratic norms.

Six years later a Congress(I) chief minister is at the receiving end: ever since M. Chenna Reddy left for New York on May 29 for a kidney transplant, discontent against his leadership has been growing, and has virtually snowballed into a movement for a change in the chief ministership.

Last fortnight—less than a year after he returned as chief minister in December 1989—the campaign against Chenna Reddy reached a high pitch when state Animal Husbandry Minister S. Venkata Reddy complained to party President Rajiv Gandhi about the "extra constitutional role" of the chief minister's son, Shashidhar Reddy, and the "suffocation" of ministers under the authoritarian Chenna Reddy. Venkata Reddy-who is peeved with the chief minister for not conceding requests for shuffling key officials in his native East Godavari district—told Rajiv that he had asked three cabinet colleagues to convey his disgust and decision to quit the ministry to Chenna Reddy. He was, however, persuaded to continue at least till

DHI

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v Care Book

the chief minister's return from the US.

Venkata Reddy was not the sole minister to come out in the open against Chenna Reddy. Health and Public Works Minister N. Srinivasulu Reddy—who fell foul of the chief minister over the release of funds for cyclone relief in Guntur district—fuelled speculation about a change in leadership when he declared that he would offer himself as a candidate for the chief ministership. He also complained to the party high command in Delhi about the chief minister's dependence on the "gang of four" ministers. "Rule"

in absentia is illegal and people are wondering whether there is an administration in the state," he declared.

Like their Chinese counterparts, the "gang of four"—comprising Revenue Minister D.K. Samarasimha Reddy, Finance Minister K. Rosaiah, Municipal Administration Minister Chenga Reddi and Cooperation Minister J.C. Diwaker Reddy—have indeed

ter condemning the surveillance of other ministries by the "gang of four", and the reinstatement of an excise superintendent who was convicted on charges of corruption by the high court. He asserted that Chenna Reddy's old style of depending on courtiers for information and formulating policies had not changed. "People voted us back because they wanted something different. Sadly, we have not yet begun to do anything different," he said.

So far, the Congress(I) Government appears to have expended most of its energies in reversing decisions taken by the previous Telugu Desam government. Take Chenna Reddy's

CHANG INDIA



#### Chenna Reddy at a New York hospital

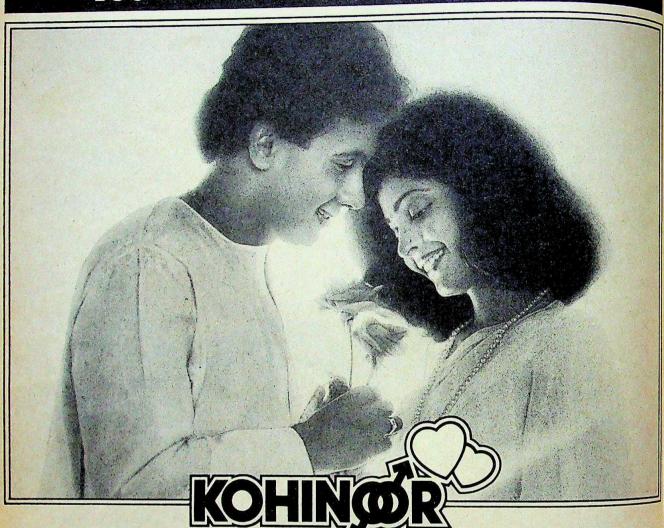
given their party colleagues many a sleepless night. "Like the striking forwards in a football team they have moved ahead leaving others in midfield," quipped a minister. Enjoying the complete confidence of Chenna Reddy and his son. Shashidhar, the four attend to the chief minister's work in his absence, keep tabs on dissident ministers and take decisions without consulting senior cabinet colleagues.

"Guidelines for restrictions on the chief minister will have to be discussed with him so as to change his style of operations instead of trying to stab him in the back," said the outspoken state Transport Minister G.V. Sudhakar Rao. And he added: "If I have to take him on again in a battle it will be upfront and not behind his back when he is away in hospital."

An academic-turned-politician, Rao recently wrote to the chief minishandling of the Naxalite problem. When he took charge in December, he opted for a soft line on the Naxalites to show that his party had a different approach from that of the Telugu Desam. Government lawyers were directed not to oppose bail applications of Naxalite undertrials, the ruthless police offensive on the militants was halted, and after years, the Naxalites' various front organisations among students and farm workers were allowed to hold rallies, demonstrations and annual conventions.

The People's War Group took this opportunity to distribute 17,200 acres of government, reserve forest and private land to the poor in five of the nine Telengana districts, extort money from businessmen, grab or buy arms and ammunition, and conduct "praja courts" where they dispensed justice in petty village disputes, often giving gruesome verdicts like chopping off fingers or even a limb.

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That the soft line policy has begun to boomerang on the state Government sevident from the fact that today even Congress(I) MLAs are critical of it. They are echoing the protest of other political parties against growing Naxallte violence and the Government is clearly under pressure to change its stand. "The Government will not be a silent spectator to extortions, gory punishment or land grabbing," Revenue Minister Samarasimha Reddy—in charge of the police in Chenna Reddy's absence—has warned.

Partymen are also critical of what they call "official excesses" in the campaign to weed out bogus ration card holders. They believe many genuine beneficiaries have been deprived of their cards in the process, denying them access to the populist Rs 2 a kilo rice scheme for the poor.

Chenna Reddy's decisions to scrap the mandals—each comprising a cluster of five to nine villages-for the larger taluks in rural administration and to reappoint village officers, posts abolished by former chief minister N.T. Rama Rao, are other measures that have attracted a great deal of flak. Many Congressmen call them "antipeople" measures that will work against the interests of the party. "The taluk office and the village officer are like cogs in the wheel that Rama Rao had got rid of to win the sympathy of the rural poor. By reviving both we are helping him," said the vocal Congress(I) MP Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy. He said it was almost as if Chenna

Reddy wanted to give the state back on a platter to the Telugu Desam.

That is undoubtedly an exaggeration. In fact Chenna Reddy even telephoned Rajiv from New York and discussed the growing factionalism. He asked him to refrain from postponing his three day visit to Andhra Pradesh beginning July 16 and asserted that he would be back before the working committee meetings on July 22

Even the dissidents will have to wait till then to test their strength against the master manipulator. For with Chenna Reddy's return, their sudden show of strength may turn out to have been merely a case of mice acting up because the cat is away.

-AMARNATH K. MENON

HYDERABAD

# **Royal Row**

EW passers-by could have imagined that the man in polyester clothes who was protesting from atop a raised platform had anything to do with the ex-ruler of Hyderabad, Osman Ali Khan. Perhaps, the only clue to the stubble-faced youth's royal descent was a garish portrait of the erstwhile Nizam that had been propped up in the background.

However, Dilshad Jah, 26, one of the 54 grandsons of the last Nizam, was not agitating for something extraordinary. In fact, he was on a hunger strike for something far too basic: he was striking to secure his bread and butter. More than four decades after they were divested of the throne, the heirs of the wealthy Asaf Jahi rulers are still awaiting their rightful inheritance. Meanwhile, desperate, they are quarrelling among themselves and with the trustees in an effort to raise the badly needed money.

The latest protest is merely another step in what has come to be a long drawn battle. It concerned the exact amount of aid that was to be given to the 54 grandsons and 94 great-grandsons of the Nizam from the income accruing from the lewellery for Family Trust (JFT) intended to help descendants in distress. The corpus amounting to Rs 2 crore invested in government bonds after the sale of jewellery can be



Dilshad Jah on strike

encashed only when the bonds mature in 1995. By the agreement signed last month, the descendants agreed to distribute 60 per cent of the surplus income of the JFT—which is about Rs 2.70 lakh—among the grandsons and the rest among the great-grandsons.

However, this agreement does not necessarily mean an end to the problems of the heirs. Their attention is now focused on the jewels put up for sale but stayed due to a legal battle with the Government of India which is interested in buying some of them as art treasures. For their immediate needs, Jah and oth-

ers want the income from the supplementary jewellery trust to be distributed as maintenance allowance of Rs 1,500 a month to them. Explains Jah: "The aim of the hunger strike was merely to draw attention to the mismanagement of the trusts, which are not helping the beneficiaries get what is their due quickly."

Counters a trustee:
"In their anxiety to get
the money as soon as possible, the benficiaries have
failed to understand the
delays that are invariably
caused by legal wrangles." Trustees are also
quick to point out that
even the great-grandchildren are being helped

though it is not provided for in any of the trust deeds. In turn, the royal heirs allege that the trustees are living off the incomes from the trusts. And though they do not substantiate such charges, the constant mudslinging is symptomatic of the festering unpleasantness that exists between the trustees and the beneficiaries.

Meanwhile, Jah says that the family's only hope lies in the sale of the jewels. So, he along with the other grandsons, has appealed to Prime Minister V.P. Singh to ensure the quick and smooth sale of the jewellery. The battle royale will escalate yet.

-AMARNATH K. MENON

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# **Locking Horns**

### Bureaucrats take on legislators



ORISSA

INSTEAD of poring over files, senior bureaucrats in Orissa are suddenly scouring legal briefs. Reason: they are engaged in a bizarre tussle with a

committee of the Legislative Assembly which ordered that IAS officers furnish for scrutiny statements of property they own.

The issue has snowballed into a major conflict between the legislature and bureaucracy. Officials of the Indian Forest Services have also joined their IAS brethren in seeking legal recourse against the House commit-

Photographs by Eastern Press Agend





Yudhistir Das and Ashok Das

tee's directive. The Administrative Tribunal has thrown out the petition of the bureaucrats saying it had no jurisdiction over the legislature.

However, earlier the tribunal had granted an injunction to the officers association and stalled the working of the House committee for a limited period. The Speaker, Yudhistir Dashas indicted the tribunal for its patent illegality in doing so, asserting that the judiciary and legislature should stick to their respective jurisdictions,

Amid thumping of desks by elated members, the Speaker said: "The House panel's task was laudable and the holders of high offices like Caesar's wife, should be above suspicion." He also said that the only thing required from the officers was their property lists, and their resistance to revealing them was bound to aggravate the suspicion of the people particularly because of the current polluted social atmosphere.

And this has happened. The stock of the bureaucracy has indeed fallen



UTTAR PRADESH

## Officers' Ire

### Furore over mass transfers



IN Uttar Pradesh, the bureaucracy and the police are taking up cudgels. Not against each other, but against the state's Janata Dal leaders.

Half a dozen incidents of physical confrontation and the Government's wavering transfer policy have chilled relations between the administration and the political bosses.

The IAS Welfare Association took up three cases at the chief secretary's level in May. It complained that on February 21, an MLA, Nrivendra Kumar Singh, roughed up Special Secretary of Horticulture Harish Chandra; another MLA, Ravidas Mehrotra, on March 17, manhandled Transport Commissioner Laxmi Chand; and an MP, Ganga Charan Rajput, led a violent demonstration against the DM of Hamirpur, R.C. Srivastava. What is alarming is that it is for the first time that such widespread confrontations between politicians and bureaucrats have taken place.

Typically the more serious crisis pertains to transfers. The Government has undertaken mass transfers, ordering the move of as many as 326 of the 520 IAS and 169 of the 411 IPS officials in the state's biggest ever administrative shake-up: an amazing 62 per cent displacement for the IAS and 41 per cent for the IPS. Fifty-six of the 63 districts have got a new set of officials.

Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav has an explanation: "When a new party comes to power and aims to bring about change, large scale trans-

Yadav addresses an official meeting

fers are unavoidable." More than the scale of transfers, it's the manner of the operation which is ruffling feathers. The policy of transfers only after a minimum of three years has been reduced to two. Also, seniority norms have been flouted, and junior batches given better postings. Says a deputy inspector general of police: "If there are no norms like seniority, merit or stability of tenure, what is the target which we should try to achieve?"

Inevitably, concern revolves around the rampant political interference. Till June, the chief minister's office had received some 2,500 letters from MPs and MLAs pertaining to transfers and postings. But Appointment Secretary Neera Yadav denies that political considerations influenced the transfers. Says she: "We took decisions on merit."

While the chief minister and Neera Yadav crow that this is the first time that no transfers were being cancelled under pressure, the two associations point out that in about 100 cases transfer orders have been changed overnight under political pressure. Now both the associations are busy analysing the transfers to take up the matter at the highest level.

Meantime, the ironic twist is that despite the chief minister's transfer spree, none of the seven controversial departmental secretaries, against whom Yadav had levelled serious charges as leader of the Opposition, has been touched. The IPS Officers' Welfare Association boasts a parallel. Quips one young official: "Despite such a big transfer mela, the big fish have evaded the net." The system, after all, has changed only so much.

-DILIP AWASTHI

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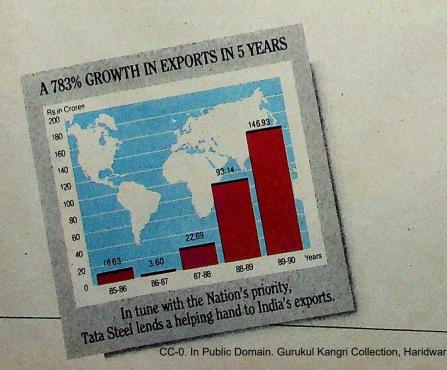
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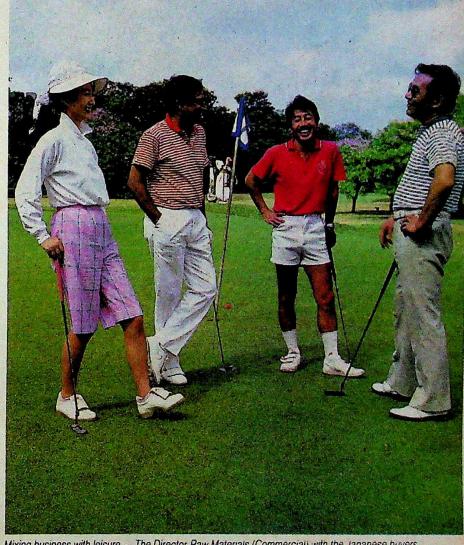
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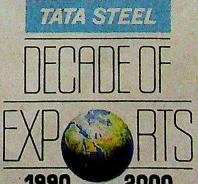
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/ /ati sharply in public esteem in the wake of their reluctance to part with their property statements for scrutiny. "It property suspicion," says Ashok Das, fuels our suspicion," says Ashok Das, chairman of the 11-member House committee which is probing the bureaucrats. Fuelling doubts is the fact that though they have to furnish a statement of assets to the state chief secretary in the normal course, 145 of the 216-odd IAS officers in the state have not done so for many years.

Undeterred by the growing public opinion against them, officials still argue that the statements submitted to the chief secretary are secret documents which are not open to everyone's scrutiny. Says Anand Rao Dora, counsel for the IAS association: The House panel has no right to call for the property statements since Central service rules stipulate otherwise. It is almost like the legislature arrogating

the authority of the judiciary and trying a murder case."

With the Administrative Tribunal trying to wash its hands off the issue, officials have two options open before them. They could either swallow their pride and fall in line with the diktat of the House or seek legal redress. The officials feel that allegations against them, however baseless, will be debated in the House and they will be damned without even a chance to defend themselves.

But Prasanna Pal, a Janata Dal legislator, says the House committee will go into specific complaints only behind closed doors and thereafter send its findings to the Government. There are complaints against 15 IAS officials pending before the panel including the complaint of Pyarimohan Mohapatra, principal secretary to the chief minister.

And even though an overwhelming majority of the legislators back the House panel, some members of the state cabinet subtly extended support to the beleaguered officials. The Finance Minister, Ramakrishna Patnaik, said in the Assembly that bureaucrats were not bound to furnish their list of assets to anybody other than the Government.

And with Chief Minister Biju Patnaik yet to make up his mind on whether to back the panel or the ministers, final positions remain unclear. It seems that in a compromise, only the property lists of those against whom there are specific complaints will be looked into. Some sort of patchup is bound to evolve soon, for politicians and bureaucrats have a symbiotic relationship which cannot remain severed for long.

-RUBEN BANERJEE

SAFDAR HASHMI TRUST

# **Facing Flak**

ALIVE he was virtually unknown, but in death he stirred the national conscience. The brutal murder last year of theatre activist Safdar Hashmi had prominent theatre persons, including Bhisham Sahni, Shabana Azmi, Habib Tanvir and Ebrahim Alkazi, rallying together to take on the establishment. To perpetuate his message they set up Sehmat, the Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust.

A year-and-a-half later Hashmi remains a symbol of protest. But his legacy is a disputed one. Janam, the theatre group that spearheaded the Hashmi movement, is facing a split. A splinter group, Prayas, has been formed as a reaction against the commercialisation of the Hashmi cult. Says Asif Naqvi, convenor of Prayas: "Somewhere along the line, Janam was taken over by Sehmat, an elitist group thriving on stunts like selling Safdar badges, T-shirts with Halla Bol printed on them and paintings dedicated to his memory auctioned for fantastic sums." In fact, tickets for Moteram Ka Satyagraha, a play staged by Sehmat, were priced at Rs 50 and Rs 100—way beyond the reach of the people Hashmi himself was trying to reach.

Ironically, among the 15 to leave lanam and set up Prayas is Subhash



Members of the Prayas group

Chandra Tyagi, the person who received the first *lathi* blow the day Hashmi was battered to death. Says he: "I protest against Safdar being turned into a local Pamella Bordes."

Another reason for the break lies in Janam's open advocacy of the CPI(M) line. Says Arun Sharma, a disillusioned Janam member now with Prayas: "Whenever there were elections. Janam would end up canvassing for the CPI(M)." As evidence Prayas members cite the change in the dialogues of the play Aurat. Apparently, the original line Aurat, tu jhanda utha le (Woman, pick up the flag) was first modified to Aurat, tu lal jhanda utha le (Woman, pick up a red flag) and finally became Aurat, tu CPI(M) kajhanda utha le (Woman, pick

up the CPI(M) flag).

What's intriguing is why they took so long to break away. Particularly, as even the play Hashmi died staging—Halla Bol—openly exhorted workers to join citu, the cpi(M)'s trade union wing. Explains Manish Manoja, a former Janam convenor: "We often raised these issues within Janam. As no action was taken, we had to leave."

Surprisingly, even as Janam is buffeted by charges of elitism and politicisation, Molayshree, Hashmi's wife, continues to defend the group. Says she: "Janam takes its decisions independently." That can be disputed, but what's incontestable is that goings-on in Janam are not in keeping with the ideals of Hashmi, the rebel with a cause.

-SHARMILA CHANDRA

BHARAT BHAVAN

# Autonomy Uproar

### Artistes protest against Patwa Government's interference

VER since its inception in 1982, Bharat Bhavan, the multi-arts complex at Bhopal has been dogged by controversy. Last fortnight the prestigious cultural institution set up by the Madhya Pradesh Government zoomed into focus again as some of its trustees resigned and a divided artiste community traded charges about its functioning.

The latest battle is over the BJP Government's determination to change the composition of the Bharat Bhavan Trust and make it "move in the right direction". A number of artistes and writers are indignant about the Government's attempt to "tinker" with the institution's autonomy. They fear the new Government wants to promote the cultural ethos of the RSS. Said Hindi writer Nirmal Verma, a long-time associate of the Bhavan: "It is difficult to build an institution but it is very easy to destroy it.'

However, the Government denies all charges of tinkering with the Bhavan's autonomy. Chief Minister Sunderlal Patwa, a long-time critic of the Bhavan's style of functioning, claims his government has no intentions of annexing the Bhavan. Says he: "In fact, we want to give it real autonomy.'

Patwa has assured that leading lights of art and culture will continue to be associated with the Bhavan, but "con tractors of culture will have no place in it". This is obviously a dig at Madhya Pradesh Congress(I) Committee chief Arjun Singh and Culture Secretary Ashok Vajpeyi, who became life trustees of Bharat Bhavan when the trust was constituted during Singh's tenure as chief minister. The two have been repeatedly charged with using the institution as their personal fieldom.

One grievance commonly aired is that Vajpeyi nominated his wife, Rashmi, on Bharat Bhavan's advisory committee and appointed his younger brother, Udayan, as the director of the Bhavan's poetry centre.

What stirred a hornet's nest this time was Finance Minister Ramhit Gupta's statement last fortnight vowing to ensure that the Bhavan would no



(Clockwise from below) Husan Vajpeyi; and the Bhavan stage mancial ye Ghasiram Kotwal

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longer be allowed to become anybody's "personal property". He also promised to turn it into a model institution reflecting "our great ancient Indian culture".

Within a couple of days three of the 11 trustees-noted painters J. Swaminathan, M.F. Husain and former chief minister Arjun Singh-resigned. In addition, two of the 54 members of the advisory committees—painters Bal Chabra and Akbar Padamseealso quit. Hindi poet Trilochan Shastri, a long-time associate of the Bhavan, also resigned from the culture department's sponsored chair in Sagar University.

All of them charged the Government with attempts to destroy the institution's autonomy. Swaminathan, a fulltime director of the Bhavan's fine arts museum, felt the Government's claim that it was going to hand over the institution to competent hands was an unwarranted aspersion on their functioning. "And what do they mean by Indian culture? Isn't what we are doing Indian?" asks Swaminathan angrily.

Singh was even more scathing in his attack. He accused Patwa of slandering the dignity and credibility of the country's artistic community. He asked

indignantly: "How can they come to conclusion that Bharat Bhavanish run as someone's private property out even holding an inquiry?" Pall responded sarcastically saying that wasn't aware of Singh's "new incention tion as an eminent member of creative society"

Meanwhile, the Bhavan founds port from an unexpected que U.R. Ananthamurthy, writer and the change like the chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi linksity, met Prime Minister V.P. Sinksity, autonomy. Science autonomy. Science autonomy. Science autonomy. Science autonomy. autonomy. Said he: "I have never



in the Hindi world because of the penness of Bharat Bhavan. And Arjun organization interfered with it.

What came as a real shock to the wennent was a statement signed by party 150 prominent writers, musipainters and theatre artistes askislokeep Bharat Bhavan "above politiconsiderations". Another group a petition saying the institution become a centre of nepotism. trouritism and groupism". The signaines included former trustee and emidancer Yamini Krishnamurthy, maker Basu Bhattacharya and Hindi govelist Dharmavir Bharati.

The criticism, however, is directed gainst its management style. And the mics are mostly Vajpeyi antagonists tho believe that by making him a life rustee he had been vested with too nuch power. They claim this led to a ack of accountability. Budgets, they harge, were given to a trustee commitelow) Huse long after the closure of the navan stage inancial year and the managing comnittee was never consulted about

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Vajpeyi maintains that the larger and fundamental issues are autonomy and the performance of the institution. and his approach this time has been autious and low key. He said: "This wernment is committed to autonomy and there are no indications that it is ing to play with Bharat Bhavan's autonomy.'

Even as the sparks caused by the acounter between the present and formerchief minister flew, the trust met in New Delhi last fortnight to discuss the ontroversy at the residence of its chairkrson, Pupul Jayakar. It decided not to act in a hurry to the crisis created yits trustees' resignations.

In fact, reports in Bhopal earlier uggested that the life trustees expected ther trustees and all members of varias advisory committees to resign en lasse to protest against government Merference. But this did not happen. he trust simply refuted the allegation hat the Bhavan had become anyone's sonal property. It wanted the Govmment to come out with evidence to upport its contention that the institu-<sup>lon was</sup> being misused.

The state Government, in its deterhation to root out the "contractor dhine, is expected to suggest some dninistrative measures. But now that olitical calinstitution has become a olitical football, the end result may ontracted the replacement of one set of ontractors with another.

-N.K. SINGH

# Go for the Jugular

INDERJIT

US Congressman Steve Solarz, the savvy chairman of the powerful House subcommittee that oversees the Indian subcontinent, is an aberration among his colleagues—an island of Indophilia sticking out of an undercurrent of traditional American hostility. But on a recent visit to New Delhi, even he was jittery about how vociferously he would be able to champion India's cause against Pakistan. The American press has been on

an India-bashing binge, and during Solarz's earlier visit to Pakistan the generals had fawned over him and played their India-the-bully card with masterly persuasion.

In Delhi, Solarz smiled politely through the usual, tired Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) palayer. Then something clicked. The prime minister agreed that he should be taken to the Ministry of Defence's top secret Operations Room where an outspoken and articulate general gave him what the Americans call a 'no-B.S.' briefing. Secret maps, photographs, the works. But most important, liberal doses of non-MEA lingo were what recharged the Congressman's sputtering pro-India batteries.

Uncle Sam is not gullible. He's persuadable. And the way to his head is through his gut. India and Pakistan are waging a diplomatic world war. And even though the Americans have been squeezing Pakistan not to provoke a shooting one, popular sympathy is on Pakistan's side. All Americans love an

underdog, even more a faithful lapdog.

And the Pakis play the game to the hilt. The old faithful ally and partner in the Afghan war. The new frontline state. Old magic, but it still works. Republican and now increasingly Democrat legislators regularly buy the statistical drivel about genocide and repression ladled to them by the expatriate Indian victim industry. At least they have a slogan. India has none except "the most populous de-mocracy in the world," the glitter of which fades each time India bans the entry of human rights groups.

Last fortnight, Senator Alan Cranston, a liberal Californian Democrat, came calling, accompanied by aide

Peter Galbraith, a close personal friend of Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. And the MEA silver was out at a Hyderabad House luncheon. In attendance were two former ambassadors to the US; a Sikh, General (retd.) J.S. Aurora; a Christian, George Fernandes; a Muslim, Arif Mohammed Khan, I suppose this was an effort to impress the Californian, a native of one of America's greatest melting pot states, about our superior social evolution as compared with Pakistan's monoculture.

But these abstruse symbolisms don't win over Senators. Cranston departed with a hem and a haw.

Indian diplomacy always lapses into the spit-and-polish MEA syndrome. No go. You've got to bowl them over. Not just by converting believers like Solarz but by reaching out to enemies. You've got to go for the jugular. Uncle Sam has a visceral, obsessive hatred—and fear—of terrorists, religious fundamentalists and drug pushers.

This same three-in-one scourge threatens India. Forget the eclectic discourses on UN resolutions and the spirit of Simlas past. Let the foreign observers and human rights groups in. What V.P. Singh and Inder Gujral must din into the American consciousness is that Pakistan today is among the world's leading exporters of drugs, religious fanaticism, and terror. The slogan is readymade, trenchant, indisputable. And waiting to be used.



MAHARASHTRA

# Landslide of Charges

### Pawar Government in fresh dereservation scam



AT first sight, the cluster of buildings rising from the shimmering salt sands seems a mirage. But it is actually the beginnings of a new, unplanned city

which is at the centre of the latest, multicrore land scandal engulfing Maharashtra Chief Minister Sharad Pawar. The decision of the state Government to dereserve 10,500 hectares of land for urban development in the picturesque Vasai taluka, 60 km north of Bombay, has brought forth a volley of charges of corruption, racketeering and environmental degradation.

That Pawar had again landed in trouble became clear last fortnight, when Janata Dal leader and former deputy chief minister N.K. Tirpude petitioned the governor for permission to prosecute the chief minister and his aides under the Prevention of Corruption Act, while an RSS activist, Sudhir Phadke, moved Bombay High Court for a stay in the dereservations.

After Pawar became chief minister two years ago, the Government came up with a draft development plan for Vasai permitting the urbanisation of a massive 8,500 hectares. Even before the Bombay. Metropolitan Region Development Authority (BMRDA) formally took charge as the planning authority for the area in December 1988, local officials granted building permissions to scores of builders. The Vasai building boom was on.

After announcing the new plan for Vasai, the Government, however, postponed its approval as elections were round the corner, and opposition to the plan was expected. But in May this year, Pawar's Government more than made up for lost time when it not only sanctioned the plan, but added another 2.000 hectares to the 'U' (Urbanisable) zone, even as it increased the (Green) zone by a few hundred hecter It also replaced BMRDA with the O and Industrial Development Corpor tion (CIDCO).

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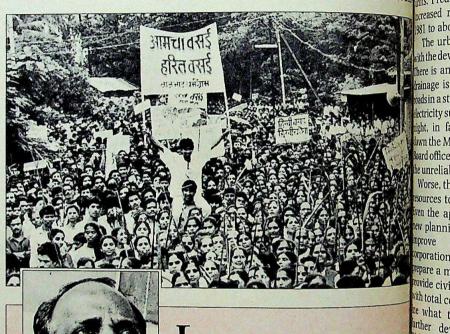
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The decision immediately attract flak. Tirpude alleged that upto Rs 2 m crore had "changed hands in conne tion with the decision". The stakes undoubtedly high—an acre of pri land can now fetch Rs 50 lakh (again Rs 50,000 before the urbanisation while apartment prices have more the trebled in the last three years. Sadana G. Warty, a former MLA from Vasaiz a Janata Dal leader asserts there is strong nexus between smugglers, but



Local groups are up in arms against the Government's plan to urbanise Vasai.



Rally against urbanisation; a housing complex; and (inset) Pan a cinco as

ers, politicians and bureaucrass. he: "Even Pawar and two of his plaster plan ters are named in 'benami' trans tions.'

Local groups are also up in a Spearheading the agitation is a Ru Catholic priest, Father Francis DB who is the driving force behind the Vasai Sanvrakshan Samiti (8 5 group) formed last year that destructed strated its popularity by organish huge morcha against the urbanis

But the movement suffered asch in the Assembly poll earlier this the Congress(I)'s Thakur, a local builder, won from

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### Rank Disorder

### Trials punish indiscipline

HE curtain was rung down last month on an alarming story of violence within the disciplined ranks of the Indian Army with the completion of the trials by General Court Martial (GCM) of an infantry officer, two Junior Commissioned Officers (Icos) and two jawans who had been accused of the

murder of four officers. The Commanding Officer (co) of the

Captain Chhetri and Major Jaspal Singh: shot by their own men

The trials exposed the favouritism, parochialism and poor management in the battalion.

Jat Regiment's 8th battalion, Colonel S.S. Sahota, his second-in-command, Major Jaspal Singh, Captain B.K. Chhetri and Captain A. Srivastava were gunned down by two of their jawans in June 1987 in Arunachal Pradesh, when their unit was on an exercise.

A military court presided over by Brigadier B.J.S. Oberoy has now held the two jawans, Mahabir Singh and Inderpal Singh guilty of conspiracy to murder the co and the second-in-command-it was claimed that the other two officers were killed accidentally in the shoot-out. In their confessional statement before the Judicial Magistrate, West Siang, the two jawans implicated Major Rajbir Singh Budhwar, Subedar Major Mehtab Singh, and Subedar Kartar Singh in the crime.

These three were tried for abetment of the crime by a military court presided over by Colonel Ram Prit Rai. With the former Joint Judge Advocate-General of the army, Brigadier (Retd) M.P.G. Menon defending the accused, the trial lasted over a year and concluded at Dinjan in Assam recently. Subedar Major Mehtab Singh was acquitted, Major Budhwar was cashiered and Kartar Singh dismissed from service. Both have been sentenced to life imprisonment.

The evidence during the trial revealed that Major Budhwar and others conspired to eliminate Colonel Sahota and Major Jaspal Singh and motivated

> the two non-Sikh jawans to commit the crime by inciting communal sentiments. It also exposed the favouritism, parochialism and poor management in the battalion and found that the officers were using communal motivational techniques while dealing with the troops.

> The motive of the crime seems to have been the resentment against Colonel Sahota during his two commands of the battalion. Major Budhwar was repeatedly admonished by Colo-

nel Sahota, especially when there was a near mutiny in his company during the farewell of a Jco. And Subedar Major Mehtab Singh had been sidelined by the co following doubts about his integrity.

Even Colonel Sahota's first tenure in the battalion's command had been controversial. He was a hard task master and had issued a warning to a company commander who in turn levelled allegations of favouritism against him. This was followed by an anonymous letter which referred to the 'low morale' of the troops in the battalion. There was more dissatisfaction when a Iat officer, who had been cleared for promotion to the rank of lt-colonel. could not take over command of the unit due to a case of eve-teasing in which Major Jaspal had deposed against him. In the confusion, the inquiry said, the unit troops were "insulated from the chain of command".

The court martial verdict is awaiting confirmation by the Ministry of Defence and the Army Headquarters, which is putting it through legal scrutiny so that it stands the examination of the civil courts. The army leadership hopes its firm stand will set an example against the unprecedented indiscipline and uphold the secular and apolitical image of the Indian Army.

-KANWAR SANDHU

order of Jordalim. The Thakur brothers' bull's considered an important factor the dereservations. "The Govand builders are hand in glove th nusclemen. We can fight the first The stakes abut everyone's terrified of muscleacre of "says D'Britto. Though there is no official record of lakh (again thotal number of buildings that have gung up, one estimate puts the count tat least 3,000 new buildings, and 1500 illegal structures. An industrial ma has come up too, largely containugglers, but mils. Predictably the popular

thakur is the younger brother of the Dakur Jayendra Thakur, a close as-

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981 to about 6.5 lakhs today. The urbanisation hasn't kept pace with the development of civic amenities. there is an acute water shortage, the fainage is virtually non-existent, the madsin a state of total disrepair, and the atricity supply intermittent. Last fortight, in fact, irate residents burned bwn the Maharashtra State Electricity bard office in Vasai, protesting against unreliable electricity supply.

areased rapidly—from 2.5 lakhs in

Worse, there is no civic body with the sources to provide essential services. tren the appointment of cideo as the by planning authority is unlikely to the situation as opporation's role would only be to repare a master plan for the area, not tovide civic amenities. "We are faced with total collapse. I cannot even imagwhat the situation will be after orther development," said Marcus Jabre, Green Vasai secretary.

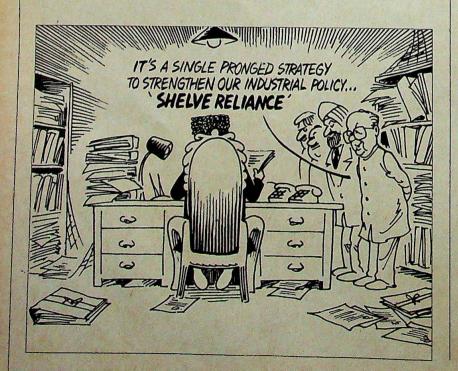
Pawar's office maintained that he not comment on Vasai as the wembly was in session. But the new than Development Secretary, D.T. Jotoh, defended the clearance of the asai plan as a necessity for checking aphazard development. "We brought CIDCO as it has more experience with inning townships," he declared.

But by the time CIDCO devises a aster plan, the topography of Vasai Ayhave changed forever. Pointing out atVasai is situated between the indusad zones of Bombay, Thane, and Vapi Gujarat, Hitendra Thakur says it's the Stplace to live in for people working in industrial belts. But with Vasai's esidents willing to move court and take the streets to protect the area, the awar Government may be faced with hany roadblocks in its attempt to transon the pastoral community into a

-M. RAHMAN







DIED: Laldenga, 62. Mizo National Front president and former Mizoram



chief minister, of lung cancer in London. He defied the Indian Gov. ernment for more than 25 years and raised the demand for an independent Mizoram. In 1986, he

signed an accord with the Rajiv Gandhi government under which full statehood was given to Mizoram,

CONFERRED: On C.P. Srivastava former International Maritime Organisation secretary-general, honorary knighthood by the queen of England for his contribution to world shipping.

APPOINTED: Abdul Sattar, as Pakistan's new high commissioner to India. replacing Bashir Babar who served for barely seven months. Sattar has had two stints in India earlier-as deputy high commissioner in 1971 and as ambassador from 1978 to 1982.

SHOT DEAD: Balwant Singh, moderate Akali leader, former Punjab fi-



nance minister and businessman, in Chandigarh. He was the co-architect of the Punjab accord of 1985 with the late Harchand Singh Longowal and virtually

ran the state government during S.S. Barnala's chief ministership.

SOLD: 10,000 hardcover copies of Delhi, Khushwant Singh's latest novel a record for an Indian author's working English. Said he: "I am embarrassed." wrote a bad book and it did so well.

AWARDED: To Qurratul-Ain-Hai der, 63, Jnanpith Award, the nations



highest literary houour, for her contribution to Indian litera ture. Haider migratei from Pakistan in the late '50s and is the second Urdu writer receive this awar

Earlier it was given to Firaq Gorakhpu in 1969. She has translated Head James' Portrait of a Lady and T.S. Eliot Murder in the Cathedral into Urdu.

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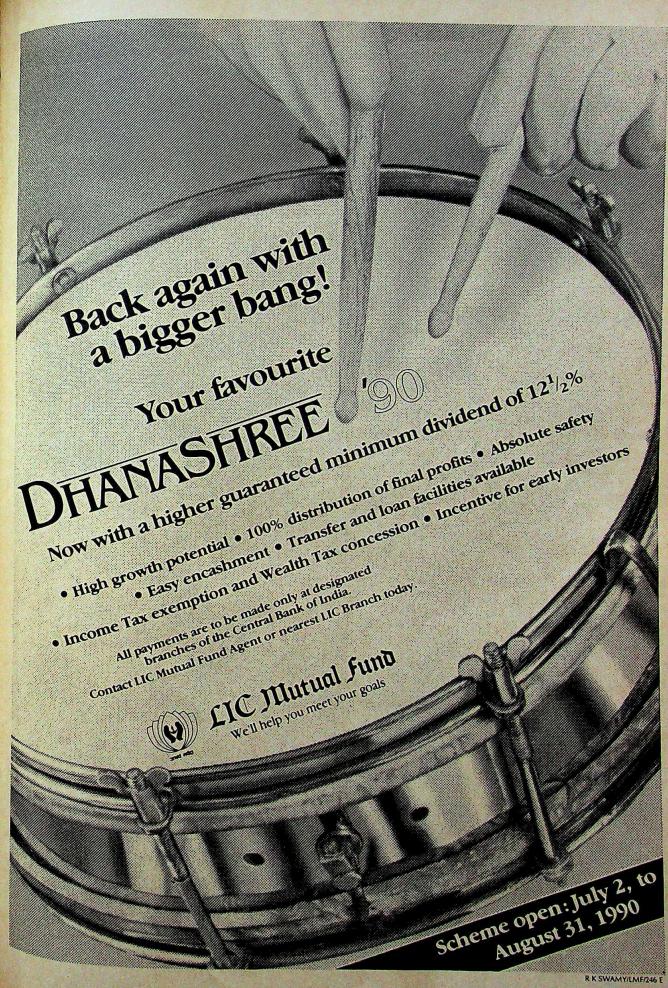
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ARMED FORCES

# Change of Guard

### Sundarji era returns with Rodrigues, Arun Singh

HERE is a change in the South Block air. Last fortnight as General Sunith Francis Rodrigues took over as chief of the army staff and former minister of state for defence Arun Singh moved into his old room as head of the Committee on Defence Expenditure it clearly marked a return to the Sundarji era. Both Rodrigues and Singh, along with Sundarji, had pursued an activist and innovative military policy.

Immediately on assuming office Rodrigues announced he was taking off from where Sundarji had left, without much of a mention of his predecessor, V.N. Sharma. Rodrigues is expected to move towards increased mechanisation, and the creation of RAPIDS (reinforced army plains infantry divisions), Sundarji's idea of more mobile army units. After Sam Manekshaw, Rodrigues will be the first army chief to get a full three-year tenure.

Besides time, he has on his side a concerned government. The seventh defence plan was cleared only in late 1988, in its fourth year when there was no money to pay for it. The budgetary cuts after that reduced the armed forces to near bankruptcy; for nearly three months there was no money to

pay salaries. It is to avoid such situations that the Arun Singh Committee has been set up. Assisted by a team of retired service officers and bureaucrats Singh is expected, by December, to suggest a framework for defence planning and spending.

The buzzword is economy. The army expects the new committee to go by the five-volume report of its own team headed by Lt-General Narsimhan which recommends more efficient deployment, manpower-planning, and cutting down of static formations and regimental centres. "You drive from Delhi to Gorakhpur and you cross 20 cantonments. Do we need them today?" a general asks. The British needed cantonments to hold territory. Today the army can close some, and enlarge stations close to the borders, thereby consolidating manpower. Several ordnance depots can be closed, fuel dumps replaced by existing Indian Oil depots close to the borders, and the repair and maintenance of "soft" vehicles transferred to the manufacturers.

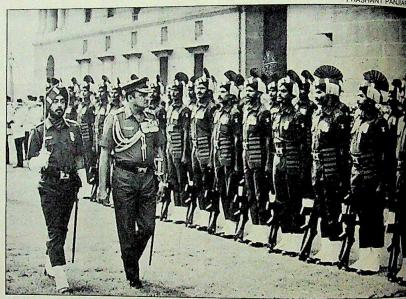
Following Arun Singh's meeting with the three chiefs each service has given him an approach paper. One

major issue is how to dispose of hundreds of crores worth of useless inventory held by the forces.

The forces say they have been conscious of the problems but only a powerful, centralised committee can find a way out. At the moment the three forces tend to function as individual empires, with barely enough coordination on operations. To expect coordination on economy measures and inventory control is unrealistic.

Now the army has demanded a chief of defence staff system for better inter-services coordination. They have been quick to seize on Arun Singh's

PRASHANT DANS



Rodrigues (above); Arun Singh with V.P. Singh: old times once again

ownideas, discussed in his paper on the United Services Institution, where he

talked in terms of theatre commands. The logic is: battle in any important theatre today will be multi-dimensional with the air force playing a vital part and in some cases even the navy participating. It would be better then to have one man commanding all the resources.

The Arun Singh Committee will also look into the organisation of the Ministry of Defence where the generals have always complained of being bullied by the bureaucracy. "It's our budget, so only we should decide how to spend it," says an officer.

Yet no one expects even Arun Singh to change all this for, if his recommendations call for radical changes, they will run into stiff resistance from the birreaucracy, something the forces simply may not have the fire power to overwhelm.

—SHEKHAR GUPTA



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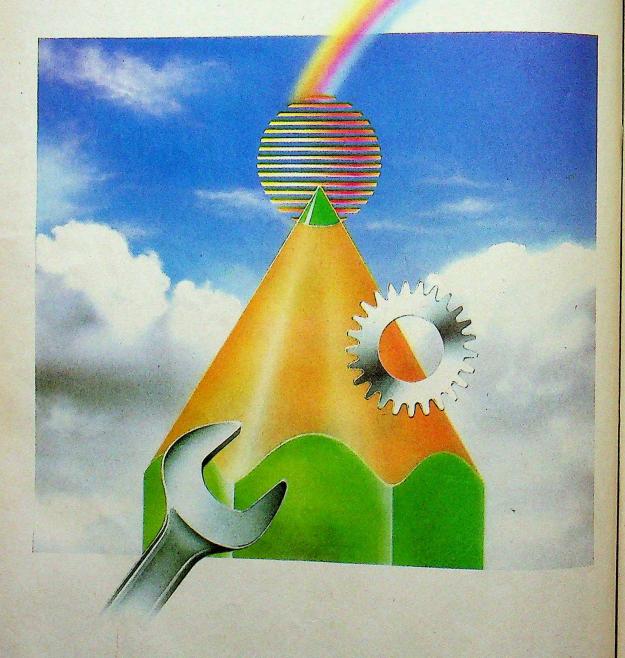
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HEALTH

# The Organs Bazaar



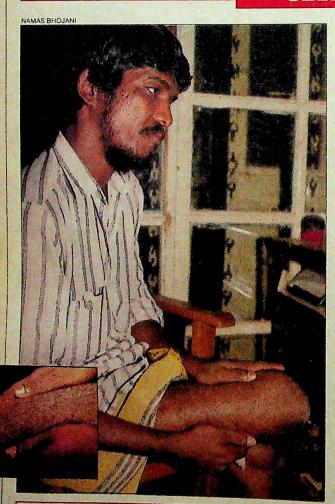
DOCTORS call it simply the human spare parts trade. The Genevabased International Commission of Health Professionals (ICHP) describes it as a "vile, deplorable and morally

reprehensible development". And Delhi nephrologist Ramesh Kumar terms it "the prostitution of the human body". With rates being fixed for various human body parts, it is beginning to look more like a meat bazaar. Examples:

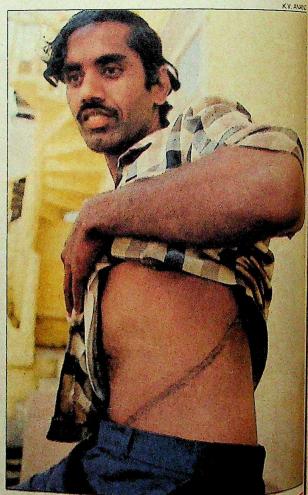
- Live donor kidney: Rs 30,000.
- Live cornea: Rs 80,000.
- Skin: Rs 1,000 a patch.
- ► Cadaver: Rs 6,000.
- ► A full skeleton: Rs 10,000.

"It's an appalling business and violates the basic principles of humanity. This commerce in organs must stop," says an agitated Dr Chicot Vaz, eminent neurologist and president of ICHP. Yet the flourishing trade in human organs in India shows no signs of slowing down. Instead, in just five years it has spreadite bloody tentacles to every major metropolis and assumed menacing proportions. It is still largely a shadowy busness controlled by an intricate network of touts, donors and hospitals clandstinely performing such operations.

### SELLERS



SHIVAJI RAM, 24, a hoarding painter, sold a patch of skin from his thigh for Rs 1,000 two years ago to a Pune hospital. It was a painful operation but he agreed because he was out of work and in desperate need of money.



RAMESH SADAGOPAN, 32, an operator in a Madras press, sold his kidney in July last year for Rs 25,000. He bought a small house in a suburb with the money and paid off outstanding debts totalling Rs 12,000.

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In kidneys, for instance, so rapidly in kidneys, for instance, so rapidly the trade expanded that an estimated 2,000 or more kidneys taken of the country—up from 500 in 1985 and around 50 in 1983. And while is and around 50 in 1983. And while is ally it was restricted to hospitals in an and more and and and Bangalore and even to calcutta and Bangalore and even to maller cities like Pune, Jaipur and ladurai. The "kidney business" now is a turnover of Rs 40 crore.

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while initially it was men who sold while initially it was men who sold the kidneys, now a sizeable number of the paid donors are women. Typically in unders, Udaya Ambi, 30, a mother of the decided to sell her kidney recently when her husband lost his job as a revision mechanic. The family was

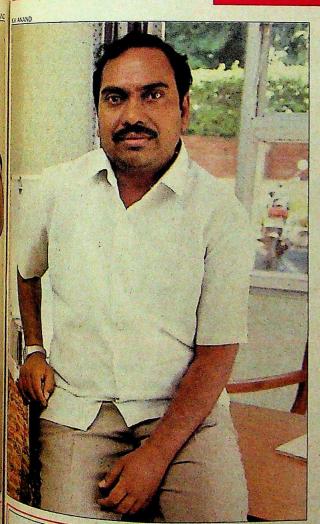


### A donor kidney ready for packing

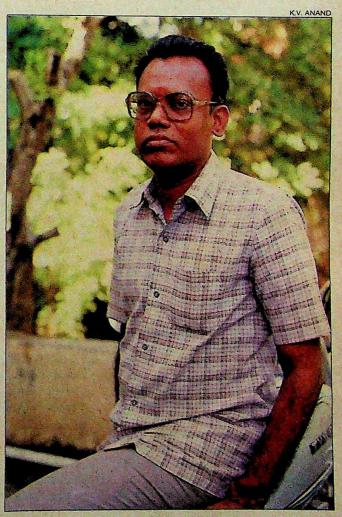
starving and Ambi says: "There was only one thing that I could sell and still keep my self-respect—my kidney."

Worse, what doctors have feared most is coming true: the trade is now moving into other organs like eyes and skin. In Jaipur, for instance, Dr O.P. Kulshrestha, chief ophthalmologist of the Calgary Eye Hospital was stunned by a request from one of his patients recently. The man in his 20s told him that he was willing to sell one of his eyes for Rs 1 lakh. And wanted to know in which hospital he could have it done. As eminent urologist Dr B.N. Colabawallah at Bombay's Jaslok Hospital says: "We have opened the floodgates to a trade

### **BUYERS**



KRISHNA REDDY, 39, a Nellore high school leacher, suffered from total renal fallure. Several agents contacted him. Finally, in loradonor to sell him a kidney for Rs 27,000.



PETHA PERUMAL, 47, a Madras bank officer, searched for three years for a donor. In November 1986, when his savings had almost run out, he paid Rs 12,000 for the kidney of a 25-year-old unemployed youth. VILLIVAKKAM

# The Kidney Colony

S a suburb, Villivakkam is typical of the scores of semi-slums that have sprouted on the outskirts of Madras. Its residents are usually auto-rickshaw drivers, theatre ushers, watchmen, mechanics and the like. Most live in mud-walled houses, barely able to have two meals of boiled rice every day.

Yet in the past three years, an estimated 100-odd families have shown signs of relative prosperity. Instead of mud, the walls of their houses have been rebuilt with brick. Their roofs have been freshly thatched. Many boast of cycles. Others television sets. Some have become traders and opened small shops.

The answer lies in the new name with which the suburb is derisively referred to: 'Kidney'vakkam. Or more accurately 'kidney sold'um.'

What's happening in Villivakkam is the nightmare that most doctors against commercial trade of organs had always talked of: an impoverished, gullible populace tempted by money to sell their body parts.

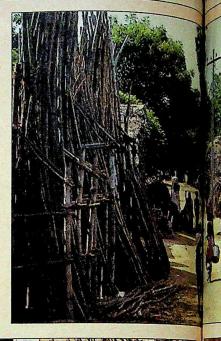
Yet for those who want to purchase organs, it is a dream market. Many of the 5,000-odd residents who live in this dusty suburb too regard it as a windfall. "It would have taken me three lifetimes to get as much money as I did when I sold my kidney," says G. Balan, a watchman at a nearby cinema theatre.

Balan is a classic example of how adversity makes selling of one's organs a necessity. His debts had begun mounting when he had to pay for his sister's marriage. And when he got married to Vasanthakumari a year ago, he had already taken Rs 15,000 in loans. His only son, Ravikumar, 3, was a scrawny infant. And with a salary of Rs 200 a month, the family had barely enough to eat.

A year ago when an agent told him that he could earn Rs 25,000 by selling his kidney he grabbed the offer. Wasn't he scared? Not at all. Balan explained that with so many people from Villivakkam having sold their kidneys without any ill effects, the fear of the operation had long since disappeared. With the money he got he

repaid his debts. And when he needed more he persuaded his wife to sell her kidney too. With it they were able to rebuild their house with bricks. And their proudest possession is a bicycle bought with the money.

Couples selling their kidneys are becoming a common phenomenon in the suburb. Not far from where Balan lives, are Rajkumar and Lakshmi Natarajan-both minus a kidney. He worked as an odd-job man earning barely Rs 10 a day. She did 'kolam' artworks on the doorways of houses for a pittance. They too were steeply in debt and could barely feed their three





LAKSHMI NATARAJAN, 28, a mother of three, sold her kidney seven months ago for Rs 25,000 and bought a house with the money. Her husband, an odd-job worker, had sold his kidney the year before to raise money for an auto-rickshaw.

children. As Natarajan explained: "We were desperate and the only other option left for me was to become a bootlegger or a local dada involved in crime. We chose the honourable way and sold our kidneys." With the sum of around Rs 50,000 they bought the plot of land that surrounds their house and put up brick walls. Natarajan plans to buy an auto-rickshaw so that he can have a steady income.

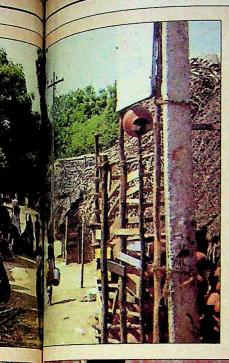
Seeing their example others like

Devi Ayasevan, 26, a mother of two want to sell their kidneys too. But Def is firm that her husband, a cooling should not do so. Says she: "I'm scard no doubt. But my husband needs to do hard labour and any operation me cripple him. It's okay for me and w need the money badly."

For middlemen, the willingness Villivakkam residents to put up the kidneys for sale makes it their favour scalping ground. Everyday a dozen

em come to derent hosp ective done at thei ood groups one money buck they ween Rs 1. hit have to hiagarajan, We ju

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### A street in Villivakkam

It's not all a happy story though. Venkat, 43, a nursing assistant, initially bought a television set and a cycle with his money. And the remaining Rs 10,000 he blew away gambling. He then sold his newly acquired television and cycle and gambled that money away as well. He is now trying to persuade his wife, Ruby, to sell her kidney too.

What's worrying many of Villivakkam's senior residents is that unemployed youth are prime targets for such sale of organs. Instead of making a serious search for jobs, many are content to sell their kidneys and then hang out at the local bootlegging still. Said one of them, who refused to divulge his name: "Soon most of the young men out here would

Photographs by SHYAM TEKWAN



G. BALAN, 28, a watchman and his wife, Vasanthakumari, have both sold one of their kidneys. With the Rs 50,000 they got, the couple paid up debts of Rs 10,000, converted their mud-walled house to brick and bought a cycle.

ncome to the suburb representing etent hospitals. They take the protilve donors for urine and blood at their own cost, keep a list of groups, and occasionally lend money. And when the deal is thek they take a cut of anything Ween Rs 1,000 and Rs 5,000. They thave to indulge in hardsell. As hiagarajan, a donor-turned-tout, We just point to people who ale sold their kidneys and that's it.'

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So far, there haven't been any deaths of donors to discourage the remaining residents from contemplating selling their kidneys. And the queue of people from Villivakkam at kidney transplant hospitals only grows longer. As Natarajan says: "If people knew where to sell one of their eyes, there would be a rush to that hospital as well."

-RAJ CHENGAPPA

that sacrifices all morals to expediency."

Abroad, the trafficking in human organs has created concern, with the World Health Organisation urging member countries to impose a blanketban on such activity. That was triggered in part by reports that children from Horfduras and Brazil were being sold to other countries where traders converted their bodies into "organ farms".

While such reports are yet to be confirmed, the trafficking in India is beginning to grab world-wide attention. India now has the dubious honour of having probably the largest number of



transplants of kidneys taken from live donors not related to the patient. Last year, a major conference held in Ottawa, Canada, by the Transplantation Society, an international body of transplant sur-

geons, noted: "In India, the commerce in organs seems to be getting out of hand and there is need for it to be regulated immediately."

India has, in fact, always been on the world map as far as trading in human body parts was concerned. It was the largest exporter of skeletons sending out something like 10,000 frames annually. But in 1985 the Government, after reports of some gruesome grave robberies, put severe restrictions on the trade. In blood, with over 5 million litres being purchased from professional donors annually, turnover of blood banks in the country has crossed Rs 100 croreperhaps the largest in the world.

There are other kinds of sale in body parts too. Placental tissue is said to be regularly collected from gynaecological wards and sold to pharmaceutical industries making blood products. And there are reports that some private medical colleges clandestinely buy up unclaimed bodies in government hospitals and use them to teach surgery. However, these pale in comparison to the live organ trade.

Reasons for the sudden boom in the sale of such organs vary. Kidneys, for instance, are vital organs needed to flush out certain harmful body wastes (see box). It has so much spare capacity, that even if one kidney fails or is removed the body can function normally. But in India every year around 80,000 people suffer from a catastrophic failure of both their kidneys. To stay alive, they need to either be put on dialysis or have a kidney transplant. There are, however, severe restrictions for treatment. The 650-odd dialysis units across the country barely TRANSPLANT SURGERY

# **Growing Skill**

T may weigh only as much as a mango. But through its millionodd tubular filters, called nephrons, the fist-sized kidney cleans up the deadly wastes that accumulate in a person's blood supply. It has so much spare capacity that even if one kidney fails or is removed the other

kidney transplants, the donor and the recipient are wheeled into the operation theatre together. Doctors make incisions just below the donor's rib cage almost parallel to the navel. After piercing through the abdominal muscles, the reddishbrown kidney is lifted with the help of special slings. The renal artery and veins are snipped and the kidney gently prised out.

The recipient's defective kidney is rarely removed. Instead the donated

BHAWAN SINGH

can do the entire job and still have half its nephrons lying idle.

That amazing capacity triggered the concept of organ transplants. Early transplants failed because the problem of the body's immune system rejecting a foreign organ could not be overcome. When kidneys taken from donors genetically related to the recipient were used, the success rate improved.

It was not till the early '80s when powerful immuno-suppressant drugs like cyclosporine were cleared for use. that success rates for unrelated donor transplants shot up.

Though organ transplants in many developed countries have moved to heart, lungs, liver and pancreas, in India these are restricted to those of kidneys, cornea. skin grafting and bone marrow. In

### Kidney surgery in progress

kidney is implanted in the groin region. After 'hooking' the main arteries and the veins of the new kidney to the recipient's blood supply, the ureter tube is attached to the patient's bladder. Within seconds of the operation the donated kidney begins to function. Full recovery for both donor and recipient takes two to three weeks. The recipient, however, would have to be under immunosuppressant drugs for many years.

Corneal operations are more delicate. The recipient's cornea, the transparent covering over the eyelens, is snipped away using special surgical instruments. And with the help of microscopes, the surgeon sutures the donated cornea.

-RAJ CHENGAPPA

support a fifth of them. And they expensive: private hospitals charge around Rs 5,000 a month to be on dialysis unit.

Unlike in developed countries, then is no organised collection of the organ from cadavers for transplants. Perforce most kidneys have to be obtained from live donors. In the past, it was restricted to relatives having similar genetic types to prevent the patient's immune system from rejecting the donated kidney. But in the '80s with the introduction of powerful immuno-suppressant drugs success rates of unrelated organ trans plants showed a dramatic increase. This has made transplant surgery using or gans from unrelated donors sudden popular in the country-a major cause for the commerce in kidneys.

Helping the sale of kidneys are the vague Indian laws to tackle trafficking in human organs. To date, no specific law has been passed by any state ban-



ning the sale of human organs. Criminal charges can be filed under the section of the IPC dealing with griev ous hurt which in cludes the unnecessary removal of organs. Bu a surgeon cannot b

penalised if a person willingly donate an organ ostensibly for philanthrop reasons. And with few complaints misuse, the police find it difficult to ched the trade.

Not surprisingly, a majority of the paid donors are from the poorer section for whom Rs 25,000 is a life time saving Most of them work as coolies, watchme and mechanics earning an average Rs 300 a month. Shankar Velayudha 37, from Nellore in Andhra Praded who set up a tea shop with the money earned selling one of his kidneys, sall "If anyone wants I'll even give them" eye or a hand for a price.

For the recipient, although purch ing a kidney is as expensive as being dialysis, there is a dramatic improf ment in the quality of his life. Apart for paying the donor around Rs 30.00 a patient would also need another Rs 60,000 to Rs 70,000 for the open tion—making it a total of Rs 1 la Then for years there is a recurring con around Rs 3,000 a month on immul suppressant drugs. Says R. Kumar (h. changed), an army officer, whose days ter Suchitra, 21, received a kidney cently: "She is now back to being! mal and I don't see what's wrong paying for a kidney. Wouldn't yout for your child as well?"

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With typical Indian ingenuity, howwhite live organ trade has developed d they are a vast, smoothly run but largely business. In the kidney trade, in gally utade, in the patients coming in the patients and the patients are particularly the patients and the patients are particularly the patients are particularly the patients and the patients are patients are patients are patients and the patients are patients dask patients coming in with renal go was for their blood group. Then an and whips out a sheet containing over 100 names of potential donors with ber blood groups listed and finds a matching one. That done, the deal is ettled: Rs 25,000 to Rs 30,000 for the biliney plus hospital charges for a week's

The donor is then admitted to the

development of hospitals trying to break the grip of unscrupulous middlemen. Bombay Hospital and the Guest Hospital in Madras are now directly advertising for donors, making payments for the kidneys themselves and ensuring after-care for the donors. A new phrase has even been coined called "rewarded gifting" to make it

Transplanting a cornea taken from a dead donor SHYAM TEKWANI

SYAM TEKWANI

With a minimum two-year waiting period for corneas from Cadavers, the criminal sale of eyes from live donors is now being reported. The rates vary between Rs 50,000 and Rs 1 lakh. Success of such operations is high. And secrecy is assured.

idney transplanted within hours.

for a while, several leading hospilas, including Jaslok and Breach Candy Bombay, Apollo Hospital in Madras and the Christian Medical College in fellore, performed transplant operaons by getting the patients to buy dheys. Their justification: we have bothing to do with the actual purchase othekidney. But with a storm of protest breaking out against trading in kidneys, hany of the hospitals agreed to stop such operations and do a transplant only in cases where the donor is closely telated to the recipient.

This decision has had a mixed im-Pact On the one hand, it has led to the sound legal. And donors sign affidavits saying that the donation is being made because of "deep love and affection for the patient".

On the other hand, the trade moved into the suburbs of most cities where private nursing homes sprouted almost overnight to perform the operations. Says transplant surgeon M.K. Mani of Apollo Hospital: "It has now become like a cottage industry." In Bombay and Madras alone over a score of such hospitals have come up in the past two years. And far from being eliminated, the middlemen continue to flourish.

Most of the newer hospitals operate in what doctors term as "bucket-shop

theatres". There are now numerous reports of how patients, operated on in these ill-equipped theatres, suffer from serious post-operative complications and in some cases even die. In Madras last fortnight, Kamala Ezhumalai, 40, who sold her kidney for Rs 25,000 died on the operating table of a local hospital.

Other examples of misuse and exploitation are growing. Bombaybased dermatologist I.S. Gilada, who treats AIDS victims, was recently horrified to find that one such afflicted victim was selling his kidney and had been admitted to a posh hospital. The police are also getting complaints of middlemen swindling donors by giving them a pittance. But they find it difficult to take action as nobody co-operates during the investigation. Says an exasperated D.B. Inamdar, additional commissioner of police. Bombay: "We are helpless. We know that the trade goes on but we really can't do much about it." The Maharashtra State Medical Council too ran into similar roadblocks when it tried to investigate complaints against a suburban hospital doing unrelated donor transplants.

Worse, with other countries clamping down on the trade, India has become an international centre for kidney transplants. In the past Indian donors were actually flown to countries like the UK to sell their kidneys to foreign buyers. After these countries banned such operations, foreigners needing transplants now flock to the country. While in Bombay wealthy Arabs come in regularly for kidney transplants, in Madras, people from Singapore and Thailand crowd the hospitals.

As worrying too is the illegal sale of live corneas. Despite having an organised cadaver programme to collect corneas, the response is still poor. The

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being t NTOILE i't youd waiting-list has grown so much in each eye hospital that at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Delhi alone it is now a minimum of two years. Many corneas collected from cadavers are obtained too late to be used.

Reports are only now trickling in on the sale of live corneas. The modus operandi, a kidney agent in Madras claims, is that a private hospital doctor passes the word around about the need for a cornea. Touts then home in on a willing donor who is admitted under the pretext of some eye ailment and his cornea transplanted immediately. The success rate, according to one eye surgeon, is twice that of eyes taken from cadavers.

In a Madras suburb, Prabhakaran, a tout, narrates how his friend was sent to Bombay to sell his eye for Rs 80,000 to a hospital. He even agreed to allow the INDIA TODAY team to interview the person. But the next day, he claimed his friend had moved to Thanjavur and could not be contacted. The same problem occurred several times in Bombay where touts, who claimed to know the whereabouts of such live cornea donors, had sudden memory lapses. Later on one of them revealed: "There is an organ mafia that immediately clamps down on such leaks. After all anyone spending Rs 1 lakh to buy eyes is going to buy anonymity as well.'

With the concept of skin banks yet to catch on, this organ too is susceptible to trafficking. It is bought from blood donors who hang around hospitals and used on burn victims. Usually skin grafts are taken from other parts of the victim's body. But if the burns are extensive then skin bought from donors is grafted to prevent infection and stop bleeding. It peels off once the patient's own skin grows back slowly.

Even as the trade in body parts booms, giving rise to what one doctor calls "the organ entrepreneurs", the medical fraternity is increasingly beginning to question its role in promoting it. The buy-or-let-die debate has turned acrimonious and nasty, threatening to divide the community like nothing else. Says cardiologist Sudhakar Sane, president, Maharashtra State Medical Council: "Commercial trafficking in human organs has become the biggest medical ethics issue in the country.

The crux of the ethics issue is whether doctors should perform operations where they know that the organ is being bought for a price. Dr Vidya Acharya, head of the Nephrology Department of Bombay's KEM Hospital, thinks it has led to "gullible impover-

### IN FAVOUR



Fan I turn away patients needing kidneys and say await your death?"

ASHOK KIRPALANI Nephrologist, Bombay Hospital



f it's a question of money I would earn a lot more by running dialysis units."

> DR K.C. REDDY **Urologist, Guest Hospital**



one of my relatives' kidneys were suitable so I had to purchase one."

DR RAMACHANDRA RAO Surgeon and renal patient

ished donors" being exploited by the rich. "The alliance between unscru pulous doctors, unscrupulous agent and unscrupulous hospitals is an indica tion of the ethical and moral deteriora tion in the medical profession. Organ trafficking must stop", she says.

Those doing the organ transplants are equally vehement that it should be carried on. "We are burying our heads in the sand," says nephrologist b Ashok Kirpalani of Bombay Hospital



"What does one do when there are no organs forthcoming from cadavers? Do I tum my patient away and sar prepare for death?" he asks. "As long as it is properly regulated there is noth.

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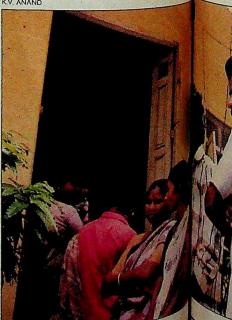
So, wha

Thatisa

ing wrong with organ transplants." And urologist Dr K.C. Reddy, whose Guest Hospital programme is among the better-run live unrelated donor programmes in the country, says: "If it'sa question of money I would make a lot more running dialysis units. I'm not purchasing a kidney. I'm giving some one the gift of life. Tell me, what's so ethically objectionable about that?"

While most doctors acknowledge there are pressing needs for organ trans plants they are not convinced by arguments to allow live unrelated donor transplants. They fear that it can never be regulated effectively and would p out of hand leading to exploitation and death. Says Dr M.K. Mani of Apollo Hos pital: "Even with the best of intentions you can't police such a system and prevent the donor from being exploited Secondly, we must build public opinion

K.V. ANAND



uset the cadaver programme on. If we we to allow purchase of live ormentale dead donor programme will the off."

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That is a crucial point. For one, there Worrying signs that transplants inoving organs from close relatives are iginning to drop. Secondly, despite states making noises about setup a cadaver donor programme, has never been pushed through hanks to the easy availability of organs the human body market. Also the rade exposes a desperately needy popuke to the danger of not only being apolited but often losing their lives as Rall Says urologist Dr Colabawallah: lisessentially an exploitative business transferring the health of the poor to berich." Doctors also fear that with the nedical advances already made in the ransplantation of the liver, pancreas, lugs and heart, there is no check egainst the entire organ trade turning aploitative and illegal.

So, what is the way out? In Maharishtra, the mecca of the organ trade, a mit petition in the Bombay High Court sw the Government finally move into ation. A special committee headed by he Medical Education Directorate went the entire question of organ translantation and submitted its report last anth. Its recommendations: Bring in a aw banning the commerical sale of gans. Facilitate kidney tranplants therethe recipient is genetically related bledonor. Any other unrelated donor bust be screened first by a special comaitee consisting of doctors, lawyers and social workers to ensure that it is

Potential kidney donors queue up

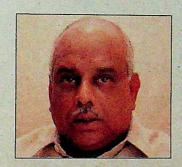


### AND AGAINST



The floodgates are opened to a trade that sacrifices all morals to expediency."

DR B.N. COLABAWALLAH Urologist, Jaslok Hospital



Ban the commerce of organs. The only answer is a cadaver programme."

DR CHICOT VAZ
Neurologist, President, ICHP



Purchase of live organs is preventing cadaver programmes from taking off."

DR M.K. MANI Urologist, Apollo Hospital being done only for altruistic purposes. More importantly the committee suggested that the cadaver donor programme must be stepped up.

That, most doctors say, is vital. Several states like Maharashtra already have laws permitting removal from cadavers. But running a cadaver donor programme is not as simple as it seems. There are problems getting donors to register and to collect the required organs within a few hours after death (most organs need to be collected within the first six hours). Only now are some of the centres finally getting underway.

The major hindrance, however, is the definition of death which in India states that there should be "cessation of heartbeat and stopping of respiration". This is usually too late for getting donated organs in good condition.

Doctors point out that elsewhere in the world the definition has shifted to "brain stem" death. That's because in a majority of cases, especially in road accidents, cessation of brain activity can occur long before the person actually stops breathing. In effect, then, patients can be kept alive artificially till recipients for their organs can be found and the transfer done immediately. The "beating heart" donors, as these are called, have led to organs being collected more successfully from cadavers abroad.

Several doctors, however, oppose such a move and think the law is being enacted primarily to allow Indian surgeons to get into high technology surgery. There is also the danger of the law being misused. In India literally anything including death can be falsified. And in smaller hospitals, with no sophisticated facilities available to determine brain death, it could easily be exploited. Says Dr Chicot Vaz: "The way out is to authorise only a few leading institutions to certify death. And let the programme expand slowly."

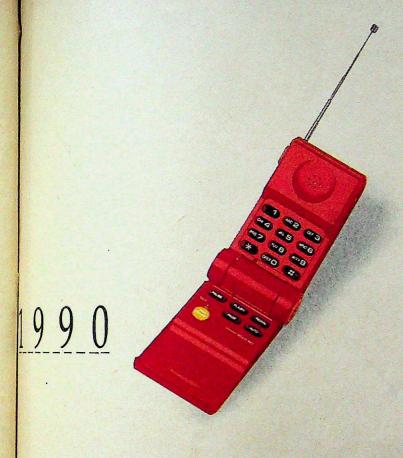
Meanwhile, the Union Government has also been toying with the idea of passing an act preventing trafficking in organs. And to alter the definition of death as well. So far, however, it has been indulging in plenty of seminar talk without any positive action.

Doctors now call for a strict law penalising trafficking and urgent steps to launch a full-fledged viable cadaver donor programme. If any unrelated donor organ transplants are to be permitted then they must be strictly regulated. And these steps need to be implemented immediately. Otherwise the nightmare of "human organ farms" may soon become a reality.

-RAJ CHENGAPPA in Bombay and Madras

9





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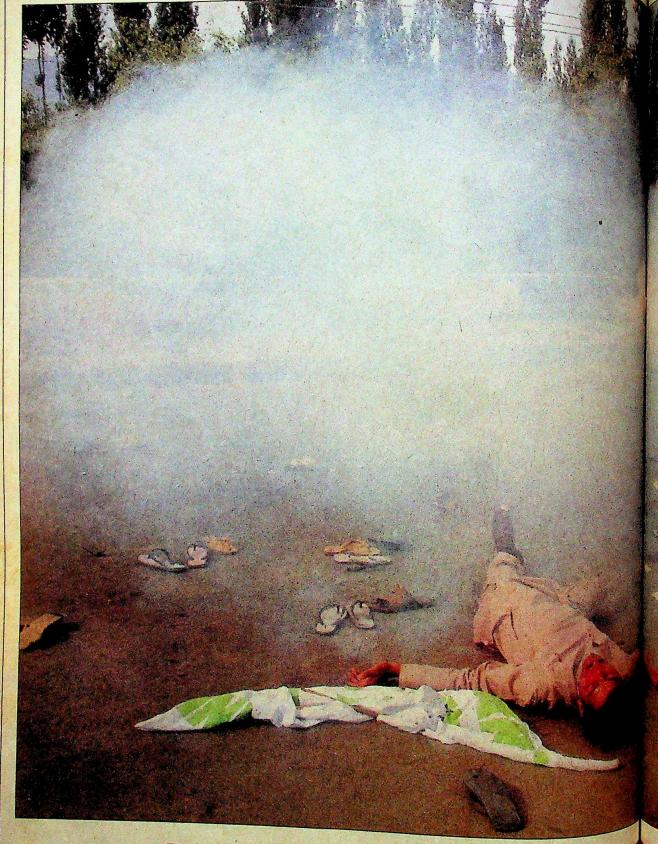
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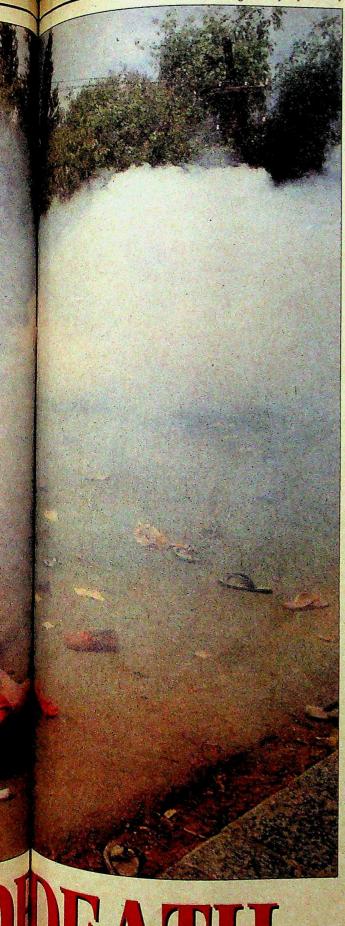


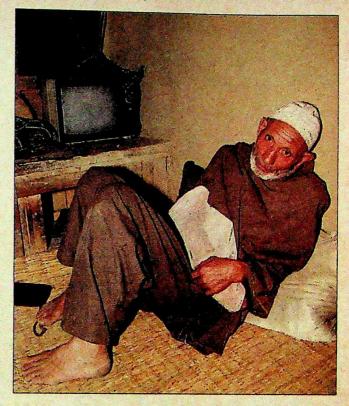
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KASHMIR SHADOWS ON





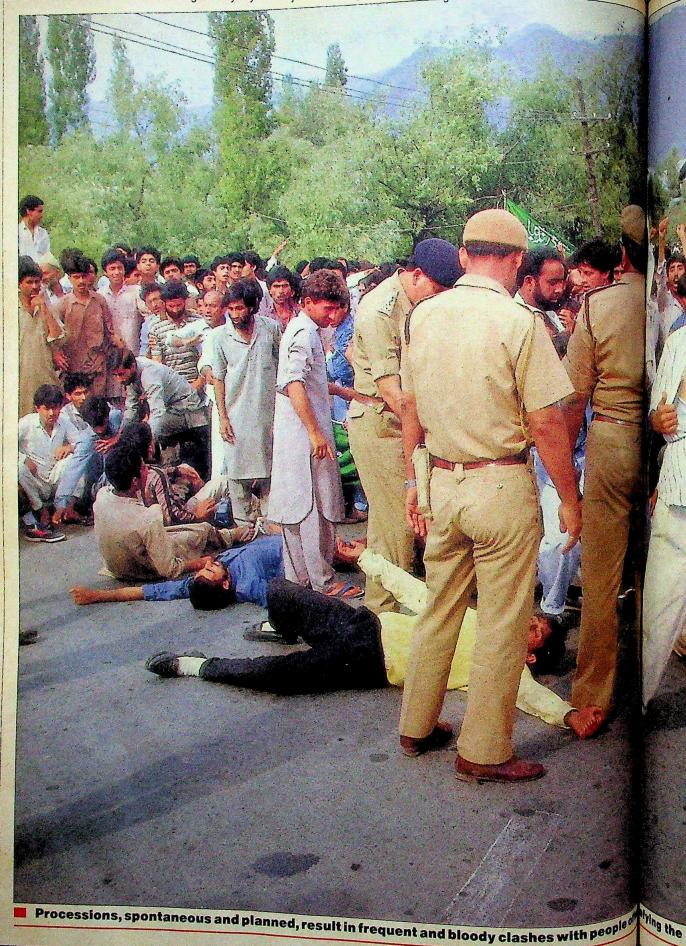
Kashmir is wilting; its people struggling to survive. Senior Correspondent HARINDER BAWEJA and Photographer SHARAD SAXENA spent a week in the valley to bring this portrait of continuing tragedy.

VERYWHERE there's pain. There's darkness everywhere. The valley has lost its magic, its mystique. It stretches like a pale shadow of its familiar verdant and joyful self. Summertime was when its people welcomed droves of tourists and sent truckfulls of fruit to distant destinations. This summer, too, they're busy: counting the dead. They display an eerie defiance. A people learning to live with death.

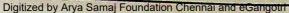
Lal Chowk is Srinagar's nerve-centre.
Once, in summer, hundreds of tourists flocked here. Today Lal Chowk presents the silence of the graveyard. The shops rarely open. They smell musty. Piles of embroidered phirans and shawls lie unsold. Crates of cherries and dry fruit beckon, but there are no buyers. There are no tourists and the Kashmiri's overriding concern today is not to sell almonds, but to buy vegetables.

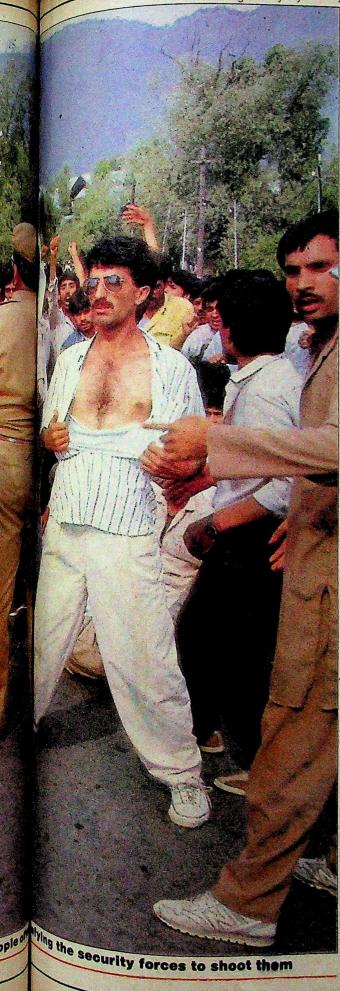
Strife has redefined existence. Redefined what is normal. If vegetables come into the markets it is abnormal, for it means the state is

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennal and eGangotri



Processions, spontaneous and planned, result in frequent and bloody clashes with people





in control. It is normal if nothing is available. Abdul Hamid, a student, ate wild grass and it only made him more determined: things can't get worse. Tortured bodies are recovered routinely from street corners; the bleeding are found lying by the roadside. There are daily gunbattles. Militant ambushes. Retaliatory police raids. Processions that inevitably run into edgy policemen. The odd protestor left behind in the debris of the day's clash. But people learn to cope. Mir Ahmed, 67, seldom ventures out. When he does, he makes it a point to keep a neatly folded piece of paper bearing his name and address in his pocket. Why die nameless?

ITH the markets closed, the mosques have become 'departmental stores'. There is food for the needy, medicines for the injured and neatly stacked piles of shrouds to bury the dead.

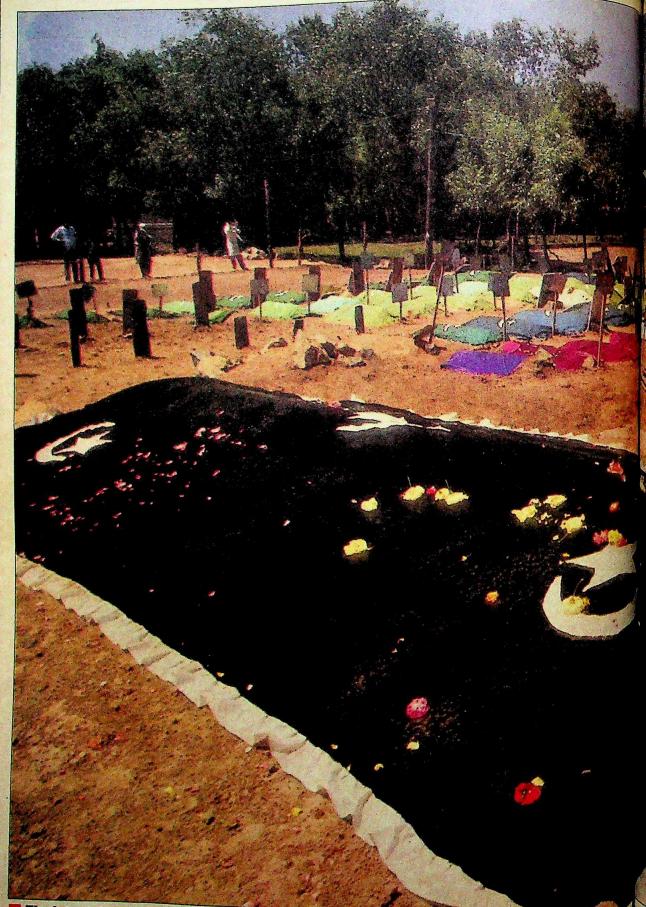
Death, it seems, inspires the living. The 'local attraction', the 'tourist spot'—if it may so be called—is not the Dal Lake, but the Idgah. It's to the martyrs' section of this sprawling graveyard, where several top militants lie buried, that the parents come, dragging their children. The women beat their breasts, the men huddle together. "Tauba, Allah, yeh kaisa Hindustan hai," (Oh, Allah, what kind of country is this!) they chorus. An old man digging a grave looks up and mutters: "Two to four bodies are brought here everyday."

Some of these are of the 'warriors', some of innocent bystanders. Ashfaq Ahmed, a JKLF 'area commander', rests here as does 18-month-old Sagib Ahmed Bashir who fell to CRPF bullets, and now also Maulvi Farooq, the late Mirwaiz of Kashmir. Fear, anguish, insecurity bind the mourners. "Was Saqib Ahmed a terrorist?" evervone asks.

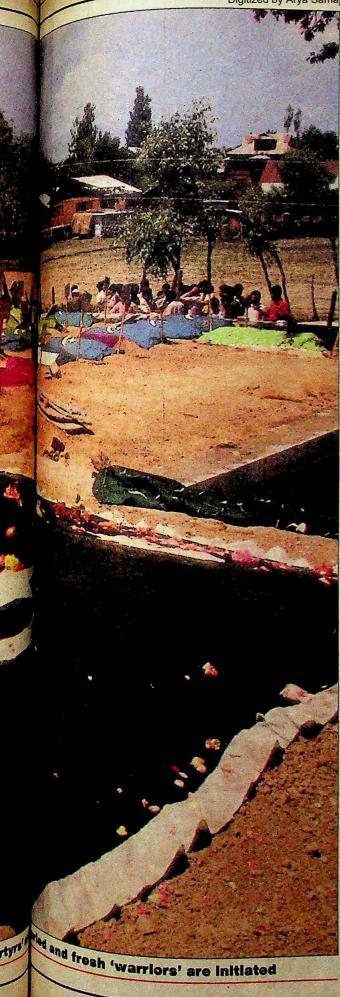
The graveyard is more than a meeting point. It is the altar at which new warriors are initiated. Defiant mothers point to the graves and ask their children: "What do we want?" "Azadi," the toddlers chorus. The men volunteer to dig the graves, and many want to book places in advance. The closer one's grave to Ashfaq and Saqib, the better.

The ice-cream and fruit vendors do more business at the Idgah than at the lake, now a desolate pond, the 600-odd houseboats

Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

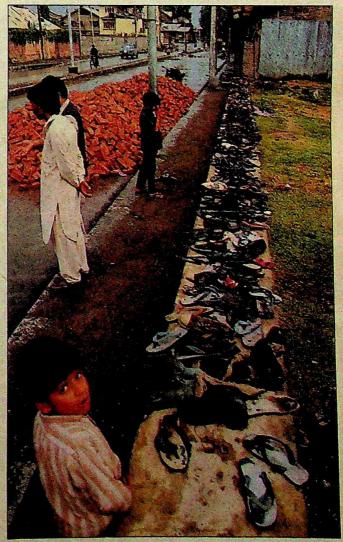


The latest 'local attraction' is the sprawling graveyard at the idgah where several 'marty's' and f

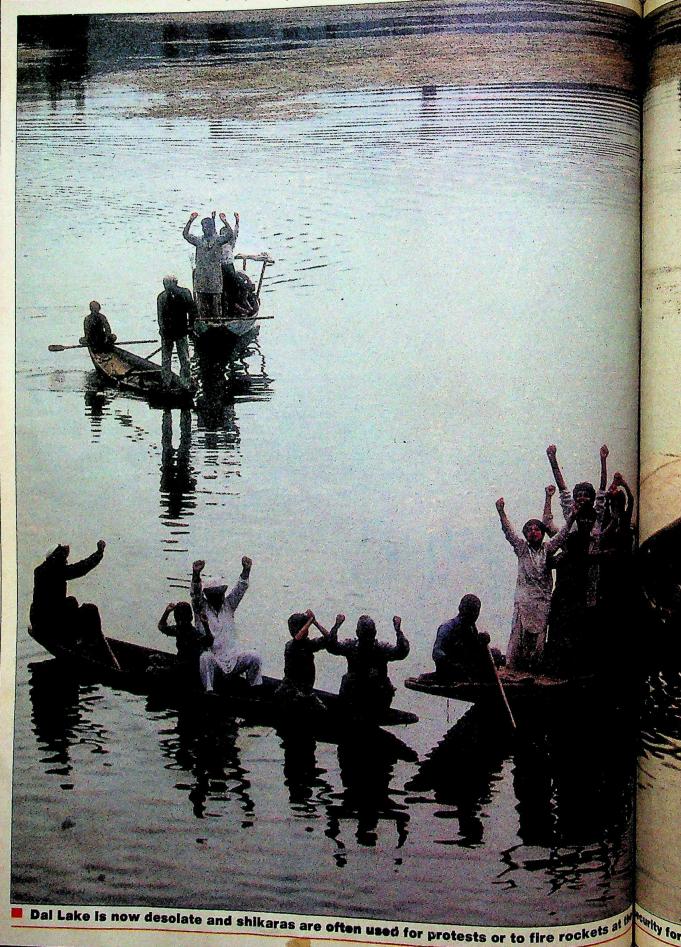


displaying 'vacant' signs and the shikaras bobbing aimlessly. And the rows of hotels facing the lake are paramilitary forces' fortresses, sand bags lining the window sills and balconies. The demise of tourism, a Rs 600-crore-a-year industry, has been followed by the destruction of the Rs 18 crore apple business. Handicrafts and carpets are finished as well.

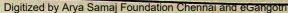
HE deathly silence enshrouding Srinagar is broken occasionally by staccato gunfire, or an Indian Airlines jet. Flights come in nearly empty, bringing bureaucrats and policemen. The airport resembles a military base. The taxi drivers are out of business. Ashraf Ahmed, a young driver, came into the airport at 4 in the morning. The first flight landed at 9.50 a.m., but brought no business. "Most of them are quickly huddled into convoys and driven away," he says. Finally at 3.15 p.m. he has a passenger. A Kashmiri

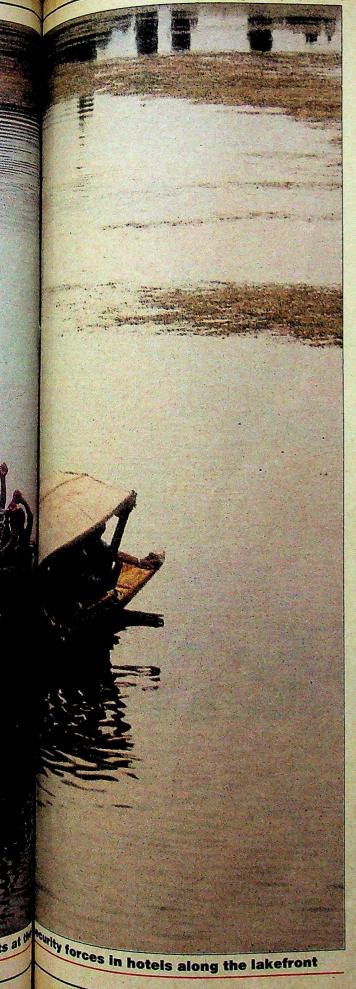


The mourners' footwear attracts pligrims



Dal Lake is now desolate and shikaras are often used for protests or to fire rockets at





Pandit who has come to wind up his carpet business. "Our buyers have taken us off their computer lists," he says.

Most hotels have been requisitioned by the Government to house the forces and employees brought in with the durbar move. The streets are deserted. The signboards tell a story. Travel Corporation of..., State Bank of...—the amputation of 'India' is endless. The pathway opposite Islamia College is lined with slippers and shoes. Mementos of May 21, the day the CRPF opened fire on the mourners accompanying Maulvi Farooq's body, killing 53. Today the footwear of the fleeing mourners makes for a pilgrimage spot.

ome schools are still open but the students are few. Naseema, a teacher, explains: "Most schools have stopped plying buses; it is too risky." It is now mandatory for parents to sign indemnity certificates. The school takes no responsibility.

Paradoxically, the misery translates not into a yearning for peace and conciliation but into reinforced hatred of the State. The women bitterly complain about the CRPF ransacking their homes. Even despoiling their food stocks. "Did they hope to find a *mujahid* in my kitchen? We are all *mujahids*. So what if I don't have a Kalashnikov?" asks Rafika, a Rainawari housewife. The children talk of Kalashnikovs, and separatist passion overtakes logic. "I don't mind if he is killed. Take him," says Ashraf Sheikh, an emporium owner, pushing his infant son forward. His wife nods assent.

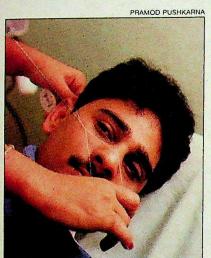
The mood on the other side of the fence reflects the same desperation. Rarely does a day pass when the security forces do not lose a comrade. Harassed by militants using innocent people as shields, abused by the people and hounded by the Government to deliver peace, theirs is a hopeless plight. "You say we are killing children. I'll give you a pistol, can you shoot a child?" asks a harried CRPF deputy commandant. The jawans have not seen their families for months.

They continue to fight, nevertheless.
Each day brings another confrontation,
another ambush, a few more dead, a lot more
hatred. And the shadows of death lengthen
menacingly.

MALE BEAUTY SALONS

### Narcissus Arrives

Besides being successful, the Indian male now wants to look beautiful too, and is going to salons sprouting across the country for facials and hair-styling.



D.N. Kumar, 40, a medical practitioner from Muzzafarpur in Bihar gets a facial and a herbal mask whenever he comes to Delhi: his daughters have told him he's looking old.

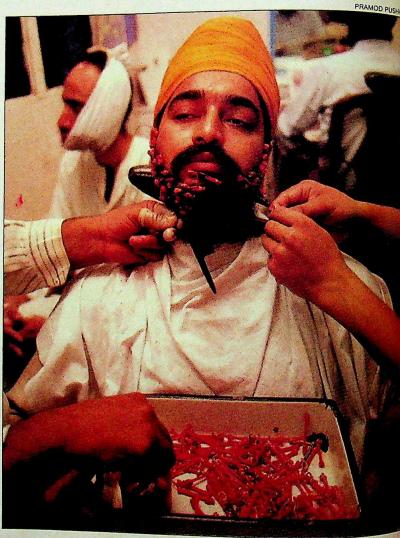
Raghu Menon, 27, vice-president of a Delhi-based company his father owns, gets the works every two weeks: manicure, pedicure, facial, head massage—and electrolysis to get rid of the hair between his eyebrows. He had his first facial in Class 8.

Grooms descend on the Chola Beauty Parlour in Madras for the Bridegroom Special package offer: bleaching, shampooset, facial and make-up.

ARCISSUS is here. The age of the dandy has set in with the Indian male close on the heels of the Indian female in his pursuit of beauty and youth. So close, in fact, that there's hardly anything a woman does that some men won't do.

He bleaches his face. He surrenders himself to hour-long facials with exotic face masks. He gets his hands manicured. His feet pedicured. His eyebrows shaped. His hair permed, streaked, hennaed or gelled. Unwelcome hair is threaded from the upper reaches of his cheeks. Those on the front line even ask friends to bring back bronzers for the tan that the Beautiful People of the West sport. (Coal to Newcastle?)

Waxing and lipstick were the only remaining taboos for the male. But no longer. "Some men get their chests and



Threading (left); beard being permed at a Delhi salon: more conscious

stomachs waxed before a swim to look nice," says Lily Madhok of Park Sheraton Singaram in Madras. To twist what Professor Higgins said: why can't a man be more like a woman?

And why can't a groom be more like a bride? Since the video has upstaged the wedding photo-album, the bridgeroom is increasingly being advised to look good for the camera, and posterity. Some ingenious beauty salons have come up with wedding specials to prime the groom for the big day. The package which usually costs about Rs 300 includes facials, massages, a light foundation and even a touch of neutral lipsing and nail varnish. (Transparent Touch the favoured colour)

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Cashing in on the proliferation of Indian Adonis are the beauty parlous the big cities. "Men have become mo conscious of their looks than women says Vinita Seth who manages beauty parlours in Delhi's Holiday Her parlours offer double members for couples. Often the entire family tal an entire day off for the sake of beau just like a picnic.

Salons catering exclusively to are sprouting in the larger cities

radduring the monsoon: Madras has ikasta dozen big ones, Delhi has one uning up in most of the plush colonies. As for Bombay. it's going high-tech: Now over Comb uses computer imagfor hair-styling and facial make-up. fath of Joy has imported state of the art dation machines for electrolysis. "Elecwhisis getting extremely popular with en particularly for shaping beards and orbows." says its US-trained cosmeogist, Aban Khambatta.

Upmarket parlours in bigger cities walso offer galvanic facials and cellurejuvenation therapy for the increasagribe of men who are in search of lost wh. To keep their magnificent new rauly machines well-oiled some salons aploy hairdressers and cosmetologists rined abroad—some from Vidal Sassoon, Alan's or Alexandra.

Men are the new, horizonless market for the beauty peddlers. Until the '70s men only entered a salon to get their hair cut-a quick one which cost him less than Rs 20.

THE change came during that decade with a greater awareness of fitness and health amongst both men and women. With the fitness fever also came a second look in the mirror. And looking good became important. What started as an emulation of matinee idols like Amitabh Bachchan and Ieetendra-which involved blow-dried hair-went on to include oil massages, pedicures and manicures. And finally, in the '80s, facials. "Today the man takes longer than the woman," says Kusum

Datta who runs the beauty parlours of the Welcom Group chain of hotels.

Exploiting the vulnerability of the image-conscious new man, beauty parlours are often able to coax clients into becoming more adventurous. Today, the Indian male is spending nearly as much as the Indian woman on his appearance. An outing at a good salon could cost anywhere from about Rs 350 to Rs 1,200. Facial, henna and dye costs Rs 100 each, shampoo, hair cut, and head massage Rs 110, pedicure and manicure Rs 90, herbal body massage Rs 175—and to top that 20 per cent tax.

Many executives even put it all on expense account, under entertainment. Says Rajiv Shah, a Bombay diamond exporter: "I don't care. I'll expense it." The professional executive considers his appointment at the salon as irrevocable as a board meeting.

No wonder the empress of herbal beauty, Shahnaz Hussain, is opening a beauty parlour for men in Calcutta soon. Her collection of beauty products for men sells like hot cakes. And the men are grateful; "Forty per cent of my fan mail is men," she says. Once, an Indian Airlines pilot even left the cockpit mid-flight during a particularly turbulent stretch and asked a panic-stricken Hussain for beauty tips.

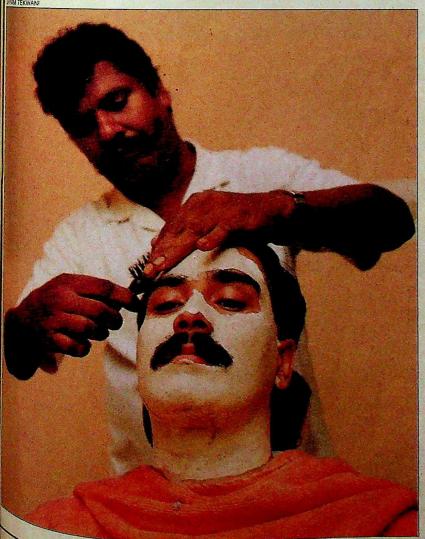
The grooming virus isn't sparing anybody. Sikhs who have always been more soigne than others don't want to be left behind in the beauty race: they now want curly, springy and fulsome beards. Hence, the increasing vogue of beard perms, which on an ample beard can resemble an Afro.

On any Sunday afternoon, Mahesh Narain's dressing salon in Delhi's East Patel Nagar is chockful of Sikhs with their beards in a myriad of small colourful rollers. Since the entire process takes nearly three hours (half an



### HE LOOKING GOOD FAD SPREADS FROM TIP TO TOE—PERM TO PEDICURE

lauty mask to rejuvenate the skin at a south Delhi parlour; electrolysis (right)



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parlous come m n womer "When I bought my Batliboi Eddy Microwave, my friends laughed."

"Mom tells me her friends did the same, when she bought her pressure cooker!"

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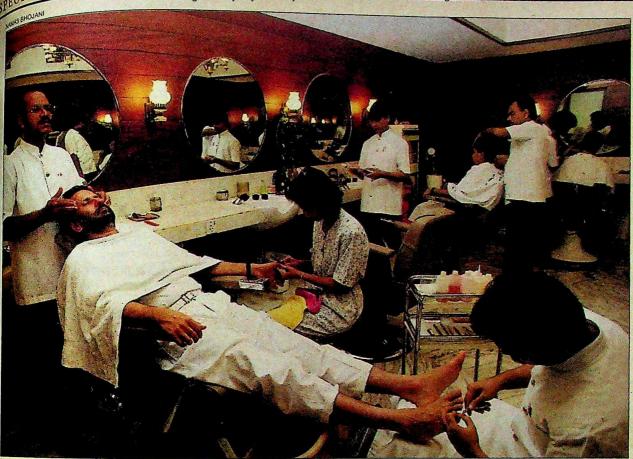
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Undergoing a facial, manicure and pedicure at a hairdresser in a five-star hotel: taking care

hour for the rollers) Narain has a video am running constantly. And a few in quest of a neater look take a detour round laws of religion and get electrolysis done on their cheeks, or extraneous hair on their beards removed by candle flame.

The contagious disease strikes from tip to toe. Habib, the doyen of hair-dressing (who believes that India is still leagues behind in the beauty business) offers streaks and highlights.

Why is the Indian male suddenly so keen on looking good? For older men—like Delhi-based Subash Gulati, 39, who has spots under his eyes which make him selfconscious—the idea is to look Younger. Running up the ladder of success has, he feels, tobbed him of his youth and looks, "From 25 until now I Was setting up my business, " he says, adding; "and my looks went to seed." He now has the money and time, and—most wife who wants him to look more handsome.

Clearly, stress is taking its toll It is the price being paid br success in today's fast-

ive Over

come and

moving world. For mid-lifers and the young executive under pressure the beauty parlour with its nimble-fingered masseur is the antidote. Some schedule their facials and massages to precede important meetings.

Moreover, the rush to the beauty salons is also to acquire a new image. The He-man who sailed the seven seas to conquer the world is no longer the model. Today's smooth-faced young man steams to conquer. There is the

young Delhi executive who allows a two-day stubble to sprout before an important night out: that evening he Anne Frenches his face for the smoothest cheek possible.

Self-love isn't the only thing propelling young men to those parlours. A well-groomed man strikes better in both the boardroom and the bedroom. In business, image makes the man. Today's man travels more. He is more exposed to the ways of the west. The

information explosion has brought magazines, films, and fashion trends into his home. India is also seeing a nascent Me-generation. All this, along with the growing internationalism of Indians is responsible for the obsession with looking smarter.

The Indian male is also having a hard time keeping up with his better half. The Indian woman is increasingly better turnedout and poised. The smarter Indian woman now wants her man smart too, nudging him gently into those parlours.

Vanity, thy name is now man. MADHU IAIN with bureau reports

#### OUT IN

Hair: Gel-wet, slicked back, short on the side, long on top.

Evebrows: Shapely, the threaded or electrolysis-finish.

Face: Facials for the smooth n'glow wrinkle-free look.

Chests: smooth.

Hands and Feet: manicured and pedicured.

Hair: Long, lanky, dirty, dull. And blow-dried.

Evebrows: Bushy, thick, joined at the bridge.

Face: Stubble, pimples, dark circles. Soft.

Chests: Hairy.

Beards: Springy, luxuriant, and unkempt.

**BUSINESS GROUPS** 

### **Embattled Giants**

### The Government turns the heat on corporate czars

ESTERDAY all their troubles seemed so far away. They seemed invincible, untouchable. Rules were tailored to suit their mega-buck fantasies. Anybody who dared stand in their way was ruthlessly put down. The entire machinery of the state was at their beck and command. Never was the nexus between big business and politics as close as it was during the Rajiv regime.

But things have undergone a seachange. Last year's whizkids are today under attack. The National Front Government has turned the heat on some of these former high-fliers. These boardroom Brahmins find official attitudes distinctly cool, if not downright hostile. And predictably, they are trying to build bridges with the new rulers.

The most prominent among the corporate czars who now find themselves at the receiving end are, of course, the members of the Ambani family who control the Rs 2,000-crore Reliance

group. Then there is India's best known non-resident tycoon and takeover artiste, Dubai-based Manohar Rajaram Chhabria. And Abhey Oswal of the Oswal Agro Group who has realised that it is no longer that simple to send his stock prices skyrocketing. And down south, the M.A. Chidambaram group, which was close to both the Rajiv Government and the late Tamil Nadu chief minister M.G. Ramachandran, is being buffeted by the actions of the Karunanidhi Government. All these groups wanted to expand exponentially, not steadily like the established business houses such as the Tatas and Birlas. And believed that their whims would be accommodated without demur. But the rules of the game have changed.

#### THE RELIANCE GROUP

A year ago, senior bureaucrats were willing to go to hotel rooms to deliver letters and show official files to Reliance

become pariahs in the corridors power. Why? Says a PMO official: "If the Ambanis had manipulated the Goven ment merely to protect their own tur posal su they wouldn't have aroused the jealou sies of others; but they ended up trame with ling on other people's toes.'

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So when the National Front Government was r ment came to power, the Ambanis came wild bene under attack. The latest blow came a still, d June 29 when Larsen & Toubro (L&) to de Chairman D.N. Ghosh announced the Government the company's mega debenture issue down had been trimmed from Rs 820 crorets recomplete Rs 640 crore. He also said that L&Ts te main cra scheme to advance Rs 600 crore d 78 to 12 m suppliers' credit for the Reliance groups a cracker petrochemicals project at Hazira stool ad-1992. cancelled: "It's not my job to gire The una suppliers' credit-I'm not a bank or idustries for financial institution."

Ghosh's stand predictably did not pro down well with Anil Ambani and Rel poss profits ance solicitor M.L. Bhakta. Atonestage a charged Anil complained that Ghoshi is is the le proposals were "motivated at the comp

functionaries. Today, the Ambanis have arbitrary''. Ghosh responded by sayin by 1989\_ fore. The s Cartoon by AJIT NINAN and ANIL SHARMA

decisions were being taken "in the Modern In the Mind of L&T House have iked out of L&T House having lost extive control over the company as as the coveted suppliers' credit.

what was the importance of the pliers' credit? In August 1988 Reli-Petrochemicals Ltd (RPL) raised Rs grore to finance three downstream overtsofits petrochemicals complex at Fora. Orders worth Rs 300 crore were and on L&T. Two months after the the Ambanis waltzed into L&T's the Govern wordroom. And the suppliers' credit poposal surfaced. This meant L&T wuldexecute a major portion of the RPL ed up tramp wiect with its own money.

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Reliance officials claim the suppliers' ont Govern adit was not 'charity' and that L&T nbaniscam would benefit by technology absorpow came on Still, denial of suppliers' credit is oubro (Lat kely to delay the group's projects. ounced the Government sources say even if the enture issue downstream projects at Hazira 820 croret recompleted on schedule by end-1991, that Lati main cracker unit may get delayed 00 crore d 18 to 12 months. Reliance had stated ance groups a cracker would be completed by Hazira stool ad-1992.

job to give The unaudited results of Reliance a bank or Mustries for the year ending March 1, 1990, show a 23 per cent decline ly did nots a net profits (annualised) though profits are up by 52 per cent. he reason for the decline in net prois the loss on account of floods the company's Patalganga plant in ed by saying by 1989—said to be around Rs 50 ore. The stock-markets have, howMANOHAR RAJARAM CHHABRIA

### I have to fight back"

HIS brief stint at Harvard has not mellowed him. For Manu Chhabria. 43, still lets loose expletives when provoked. And today he is hopping mad because the Government is hounding him. He spoke to Principal Correspondent paranjoy guha thakurta and Senior Correspondent Surajeet das GUPTA. Excerpts:

Q. Why did you quit Genelec?

A. Why should I take the onus of all the losses? We bought Genelec shares from GEC, India. It still has shares in Genelec, yet it was not called for the BIFR hearing. We had acquired Genelec as a stepping stone to take over three other companies-GEC, Avery India and English Elec-

tric-which have a common principal. But we soon realised that Genelec's accounts had been cooked. I asked the Chairman of GEC, India, A.K. Khosla, to let me sell back the shares. He refused. Now I'm willing to sell to anyone.

Q. Isn'titapoorreflection of your track record that nine of your group companies are before the BIFR?

> A. I wouldn't have gone to the BIFR

had it not been a statutory requirement for sick companies. I can finance them on my own. The BIFR is prejudging my cases by writing to the Finance Ministry. Whatkind of justice is this? I will go to the tribunal and even to the courts against it.

Q. Have you stripped your assets?

A. No. What can you strip from a naked man? I have 50 per cent stake in my companies. If I strip assets I will be stealing my own money.

Q. Did the professionals take you for a ride?

A. Yes, I made a mistake in Genelec. That is why I walked out of Shalimar Paints as I was not sure of their losses. I don't care what professionals say. If I had followed their advice in Dunlop, I would have been in the dumps.

Q. What happened to the criminal case you filed against the former chief of Orson and Nihon, Shyam Bhatia, for embezzling money?

A. I have met the tax officials and requested them to take action. I gave them details of his foreign accounts. But nothing has happened.

Q. Bankers say you went back on your promise to pump Rs 14 crore into Orson and Nihon and also refused a Rs 13.5-crore guarantee to rehabilitate Gordon Woodroffe.

A. I agreed to put in Rs 14 crore only if Shaw Wallace and Dunlop were allowed to borrow the money from institutions. RBI Deputy Governor Amitava Ghosh now says I should bring the money from

BHAWAN SINGH



abroad. They have double standards. For BIFR, we are a group but we cannot fund sick units through group companies. In Gordon Woodroffe why the hell should I give a guarantee of Rs 13.5 crore for outstandings of Rs 4 crore?

Q. Last year, the RBI ordered an audit of all your companies. Why are you under scrutiny?

A. I don't know. But tell me which other group's accounts are being audited in this manner? The Birlas, Singhanias, Goenkas all have sick companies. The RBI is unhappy with us because it has lost a case in the Bombay High Court relating to transfer of Gammon India's shares in the name of our group's companies.

Q. What are your future plans? A. My reputation is at stake. I

have no option but to fight back.



ever, interpreted these results differently: the company's scrip value spurted from around Rs 65 to cross Rs 100 in barely a week. Significantly, for the first time, Reliance Industries has made a Rs9 crore provision for payment of income tax.

But the Ambanis have other problems too. In February-March this year the group faced a liquidity crunch and was demanding cash from its dealers against sales. And bankers like Industrial Development Bank of India chief S.S. Nadkarni-once close to the Ambanistoo are no longer willing to toe their line. But the Ambanis are not sitting back. They are wooing Jyoti Basu by promising to set up a project in West Bengal.

Still, one thing is clear: the Government will henceforth refuse to intervene in the group's corporate tussles. Finance Minister Madhu Dandavate told INDIA TODAY: "The Government and its institutions cannot become pawns in order to fulfil someone's gigantic ambitions to become gigantic.

#### THE CHHABRIAS

It is not just the Ambanis who have been doing the rounds of the corridors of power in the capital to build bridges with rulers. Last fortnight Manohar

t's not my business to give suppliers' credit. I am neither a bank nor a financial institution."

> D.N. GHOSH, Chairman, L&T



Rajaram Chhabria met Cabinet Secretary Vinod Pande and Finance Secretary Bimal Jalan to convince them that the Reserve Bank of India and the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) should not single him out for conducting inquiries into the activities of sick companies in his group.

Significantly, Chhabria's problems with the Government are not new but began when he started picking up L&T shares from the market in late-1987, thus confronting the Ambanis who were also interested in the company.

Then, when Chhabria picked upak the the per cent stake in Gammon India, he was sup comp strongly opposed by the company man are mega agement. Gammon's management we was un able to solicit the support of a mysterious 30 crore 'white knight' who is believed to be impany's l a celluloid star close to Rajiv Gandhi. Tar maded a 1: evasion cases too were started agains an issu group companies Orson and Nihon las Malsome l year, fearing arrest Chhabria even of a of Capi tained anticipatory bail.

After the change in government, the Not surpr RBI called for a squeeze on the cret acrips of ( advanced by banks to Chhabria ground one-third

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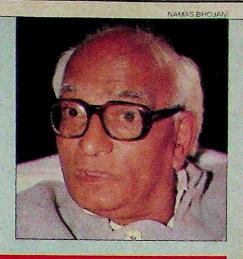
### OSWAL AGRO GROUP

As for Abhey Oswal who heads the chiana-based Rs 500-crore Oswal group, his problems began just wire the November elections when many many many mega issue of convertible debengement was under-subscribed by around is 30 crore. Then, on April 23, the company's board of directors recommended a mysterious and issue had been promised by malsome 18 months ago. The Control-med this issue.

ernment, the Not surprisingly, the market prices of n the cred strips of Oswal companies are ruling abria group alone-third the levels prevailing early

he Government and its institutions cannot become pawns in order to fulfil someone's ambitions to become gigantic."

MADHU DANDAVATE, Finance Minister



last year. That's not all. In May, the Maharashtra Government served a show cause notice on the company's Chembur unit (which was acquired from Union Carbide) claiming it was violating environmental guidelines.

Earlier, in May-June last year, the group had been embroiled in a controversy over the manner in which it was awarded the contract to set up the gasbased fertiliser plant at Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh. Many felt that the claim of the government controlled Krishak Bharati Cooperative (Kribhco) had been

unfairly rejected. The Oswal bid had been reduced from Rs 840 crore to Rs 695 crore in one week's time by excluding the costs of building a silo, railway sidings and a township from the cost estimate. Rajiv Gandhi laid the foundation stone of the project in September..

Despite the scepticism of industry observers, Oswal group sources are confident that the project will be set up within 24 months and that there will be no cost over-run. They add that the Oswal group has progressed further than the Tatas and Birlas which are setting up similar

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fortiliser projects. They also point out that the technical collaboration agree-that for the project was approved by the present government in March.

### THE MAC GROUP

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The latest attack on the Madras-based M.A. Chidambaram (MAC) group—the largest industrial house in south India—by the Tamil Nadu Government pertains to Standard Motors. The company was recently served a winding-up notice by the BIFR. Reason: the promoters led by Chidambaram's son A.C. Muthiah are unwilling to pump in more than Rs 2 crore into the company against Rs 4.13 crore envisaged in the rehabilitation package

worked out by the BIFR. Worse, the state Government initially stated that it was unwilling to give the ailing concern an interest-bearing loan of around Rs 3 crore though it was willing to pump in money to revive three sick textile mills in the state. The state's industry secretary told the BIFR that the decision to revive the textile mills was a promise made in the election manifesto of the DMK. Last fortnight, Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi did a volte face. He agreed to loan Rs 3 crore to Standard Motors. At the same time, it was made amply clear that new promoters would be found to replace the MAC group in Standard Motors.

The imbroglio over Standard Motors is merely the latest in a series of

moves initiated by the Karunanidhi government over the last 18 months to show the group its place. These moves began in February when the state government took over group company Southern Agrifurane Industries Ltd (SAFL) on the plea that all liquor manufacturing units in the state would be government controlled. This decision overruled the BIFR's recommendation that SAFL be merged with MAC group flagship, the Rs 580-crore Southern Petrochemicals Industries Corporation (SPIC). Subsequently, Muthiah was stripped of the post of chairman, Tuticorin Alkali Chemicals and Fertlisers. The unkindest cut came in late-April when Muthiah was asked to step down as spic chairman to make way for a nominee of the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation.

THER groups too have been feeling the pressure. For instance, the Rai family controlled Usha Rectifier. Last year, the company with an equity base of only Rs 13.5 crore announced it would be raising Rs 702 crore from the stock-markets. The company announced plans of investing Rs 1,500 crore in a steel complex in Rajiv Gandhi's Amethi constituency in two phases. Then Usha's share issue flopped: subscriptions worked out to only Rs 270 crore. So, the company has 'phased out' its plans for Amethi and now has firm plans of investing only Rs 332 crore in the steel complex.

Meanwhile the Rais are trying to mend ways and have succeeded in getting Dandavate to inaugurate two new projects in his constituency in Maharashtra. They probably know that this doesn't mean that favours will be showered on them.

For the Government has so far managed to live up to the claim of making its functioning more open. Directions have been issued to ensure that the way in which L&T was 'taken over' by Reliance is not repeated. "We want the rules to be transparent and we wish to remove the aberrations of the past," says the finance minister.

Though it is not going to penalise business houses for their proximity to the earlier rulers, the Government has made it clear that it will not unduly favour one group at the expense of another. The nexus between big business and politics is unlikely to disappear in a hurry. But at least it will be less obvious than before.

—S.N. VASUKI, SURAJEET DAS GUPTA, ANAND VISWANATHAN and PARANJOY GUHA THAKURTA

M.A. CHIDAMBARAM

### "We're not perturbed"

The M.A. Chidambaram group has been under attack from the Tamil Nadu Government. But Chidambaram, 75, seemed unmoved in a rare interview with Correspondent ANAND VISWANATHAN. Excerpts:

A. How can you call spic a Tideo enterprise? It was in the doldrums a few years ago with Rs 65 crore losses piled up. Did Tideo come to our rescue then? It is doing so well today because of the MAC group.

Q. Then why is the new SPIC chairman saying the company should not be considered part of the MAC group?

A. How do I know why he is making such statements?

Q. Why are you opposing the appointment of a new group finance director at SPIC?

A. What has gone wrong now for a new finance director to be appointed? He will only destabilise us. Even the

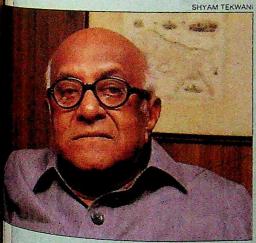
Central Government thinks so. We are surprised that the state Government is doubting our integrity.

Q. The state Government is looking for a new promoter to replace Muthiah at Standard Motors. Where will all this lead to?

A. We are ready to step down. I'm not perturbed. Irrespective of who's in power, the group will continue to grow.

Q. Don't you think these unhappy developments will affect your group?

A. No, not at all.



Q. How do you view the recent developments in SPIC?

A. There is nothing to worry

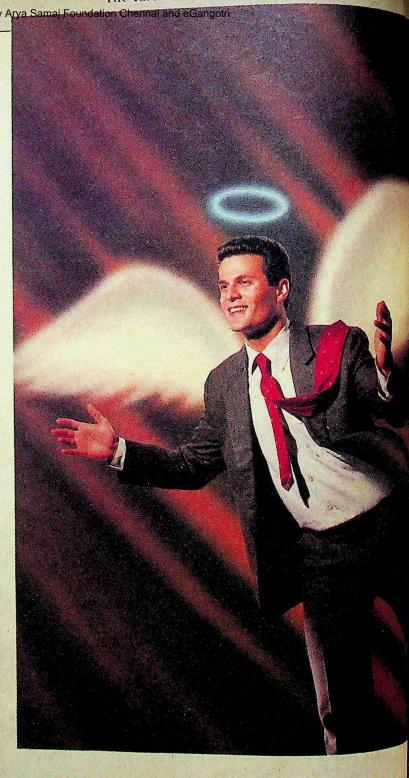
e Italia

Q. Then why have you been removed as the chairman?

A. No, I wasn't removed. TIDCO only followed the policy of having its nominee as chairman. The chief minister is a good friend, so we conceded his request.

Q. Would you still call spic the lot of people allege that it is virtually a TIDCO concern.

LF YOU WANT TO BE A PIONEER IN YOUR COUNTRY, YOU MUST SOMETIMES **RUSH IN** WHERE **ANGELS** FEAR TO TREAD.



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Uttar Pradesh. We had already built in the proverbial hundred safety factors in our earlier sets. Now NPC wanted the hundred and first. It was the toughest condition they had set so far. They not only wanted the new no-break sets to be technologically far more advanced but also earthquake-proof. All the "dadas" from across the world tried to get the order. We bagged it.

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Narora went critical in March 1989.

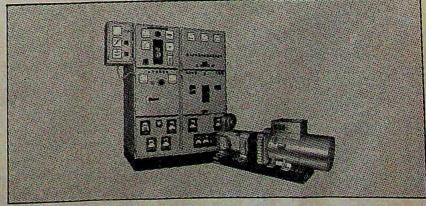
This is a power-hungry country. The Nuclear Power Corporation wants to install 10,000 MW nuclear power stations by 2000 AD. We are already working on rotary no-break gensets for 500 MW nuclear plants.

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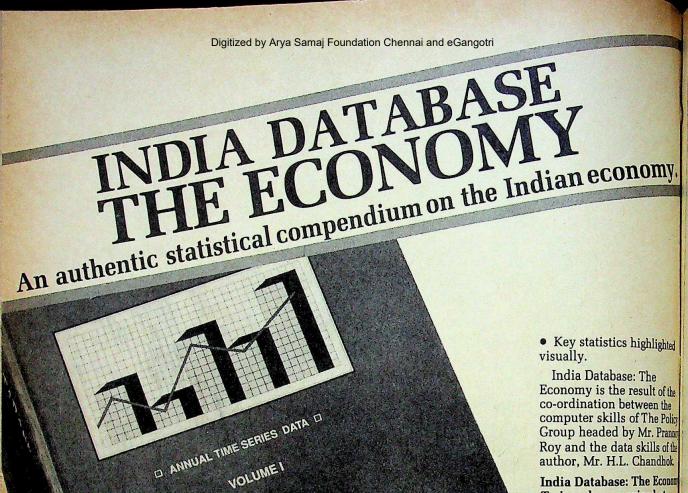


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#### FISHING FOR LUCRE

After initially walking out of an area which many of them thought was not very exciting, Indian business is having second thoughts. It is again making a beeline to enter the most unlikely area—fishing. From the Tatas to Thapars, some non-resident Indian groups are going to invest in the turbulent business of aquaculture. What's more, the Government has cleared proposals for joint ventures in deep-sea fishing between Indian, Danish and South Korean companies with a buy-back arrangement of tuna fish. The Government has also played its part in encouraging the big names to try out the oceans. It has liberalised policies on import of deep-sea fishing vessels and trawlers, making more companies jump on to the ship to the high seas. With stiff competition in the offing, there is bound to be a lot of action in the business of aquaculture.

#### PROJECTS ON HOLD

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HEresource crunch should ensure that the establishment of at least two proposed giant gas-cracker and petrochemical complexes—each costing around Rs3.000 crore—is postponed beyond the eighth plan period which ends in March 1995. These are the joint-sector proposals of Vijay Mallya's UB Group at Visakhapatnam and of the Aditya Birla group at Mangalore. A refinery is also planned at Mangalore. At present, there are no less than five cracker units vying for the Centre's limited resources: Gas Authority of India Ltd's Auraiya project which has been cleared, Indian Petrochemical Corporation Ltd's Gandhar plant, the Tatas' Haldia complex in West Bengal, NOCIL's expansion scheme in Maharashtra and a project in Assam. Since in any case it is not clear how all these five plants will be financed, Mallya and Birla will have to cool their heels for a while.

#### UPMARKET WRANGLING

DIPONT Sportswear, licencees of Wrangler's jeans in India, has ambitious plans of more than trebling its turnover from Rs 3 crore to Rs 10 crore in one year. The strategy is to sell expensive shirts and jeans through dedicated retail outlets. Two such outlets are going to be opened in Bombay before Diwali. This will be followed by a series of upmarket stores in Pune, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Delhi, Calcutta and Madras. By 1992, the company expects to cover all these cities. Clearly, Dupont intends giving Benetton, Interplaza, Sheetal and similar stores for the well-heeled a run for their money.

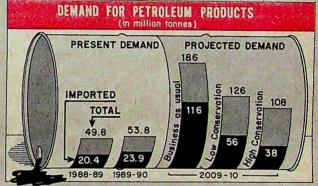
### CANARA BANK'S NEW VENTURES

angalore-based Canara Bank is not one to rest on its laurels. Posting record profits for 1989-90 to retain the number one slot among the nationalised banks in plans for the profits (Rs 62 crore), the bank has ambitious a subsidiary to offer factoring services. Besides, the bank is services and computer software and training. Initially to be eventually be spun off as subsidiaries. If the bank's past there seems to be no doubt that the new ventures will also the off soon and be successful.

#### **CONSERVATION OPTIONS**

VEN as the Government shouts itself hoarse about the need to conserve petroleum, researchers are trying to devise ways in which India can move away from its 'fuellish' path of development. The Tata Energy Research Institute recently did some calculations to arrive at three different scenarios of energy demand by the end of the first

Chart by B.K. SHARM



decade of the 21st century. The first scenario—dubbed 'business as usual'—envisages demand growing at 7.6 per cent a year. This means that demand will more than treble from current levels and touch 186 million tonnes by 2009-10. But there's a silver lining. By initiating 'low' conservation measures, the figure can come down by 60 million tonnes. And under the 'high' conservation scenario, which assumes large-scale implementation of programmes using renewable energy, oil demand can come down by an additional 18 million tonnes.

#### PLANS FOR DEPARTURE

HERs 250-crore Hyderabad-based DCL group, which has interests in synthetic fibres and cement, has applied to the Government to relocate its proposed Rs 140-crore acrylic fibre project from Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh to Mouda near Nagpur in Maharashtra where the group has just set up a Rs 154-crore polyester staple fibre (PSF) plant. Incidentally, the PSF factory is the first private sector venture in India to receive assistance from the Asian Development Bank. The reason for the proposed relocation is simple: if the unit is situated next to the existing PSF plant, its cost can be reduced by around Rs 15 crore since it will share the utilities already set up for PSF production. There's just one person who's unhappy with the development: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister M. Chenna Reddy.

THE ECONOMY

### Clearing the Cobwebs

### A desperate search is on for remedies to solve the crippling crisis

ONSIDER the grim economic scenario. Foreign exchange reserves enough just for 45 days of essential imports. Cash balance in the Government kitty limited to meeting government expenditure for only two months. Industrial growth able to provide jobs for only half of the new job-seekers. And taxation levels which generate double digit inflation.

This scenario was effectively pro-

jected by the low-profile Fi-Bimal Secretary Jalan last fortnight in a presentation to the entire council of ministers. It was for the first time that the entire council of ministers was taken into confidence over a major economic crisis confronting the country. All of them were invited to the South Block cabinet room on a Sunday morning for discussing the "serious economic situation". In his forceful presentation, Jalan made it clear to the ministers that unless the political leadership took drastic action and even unpopular fiscal measures, the economy was heading for a serious financial mess.

When Jalan finished his presentation, almost all the ministers were shell-shocked. Admitted a junior minister after the meeting: "My god, are we in such a terrible shape? It needs a drastic policy formulation.' There were some dissensions in the meeting over the question of remedies. Railway Minister George Fernandes questioned the Government's move to open up the economy. He was effectively countered by Commerce Minister Arun Nehru, who had apparently come well prepared. Nehru told Fernandes that the foreign exchange outgo on unproductive imports hadgone up by over 86 per cent over the last three years and it was time the Government brought in some foreign exchange for

well. The ministers were convinced that it was better to encourage the private sector in India and abroad to invest more and the Government should use its limited resources for development purposes only.

In fact, the consensus in the meeting

(Excluding Gold and SDRs)

FALL IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE

Rs. crore RESERVES...

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was that the Government should not only open up the economy for liberal inflow of foreign investment in selective and priority areas, it must inject compe tition within the country as well. And that would be possible only if the fiscal concessions and government controls are withdrawn. It was clear the Govern. ment was increasingly favouring the supply-side economy. Said a minister "We are in a peculiar situation. Here supply is not required to create demand Supply is needed to meet the massive demand which already exists."

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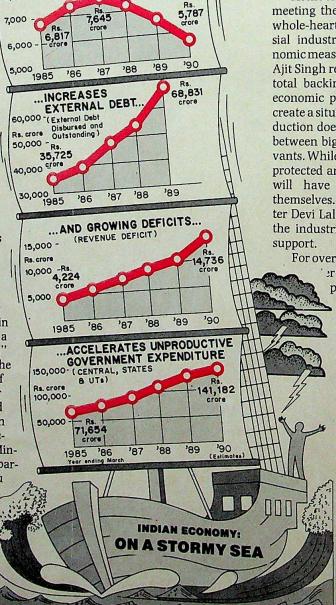
At the end of the marathon five-hour meeting the Government came out in whole-hearted defence of its controver fund inade sial industrial policy and other emnomic measures. And Industry Minister Ajit Singh required nothing else butthe total backing of all ministers for his economic package. Said he: "We will create a situtation where industrial production doesn't suffer due to the nexts between big business and the civil servants. While the small groups have to be protected and groomed, the large one will have to sustain and protet themselves." Even Deputy Prime Minis ter Devi Lal, who was once opposed to the industrial policy, came out in it

For over two weeks the prime minis er was under attack from political for permanent

Shekhar an Chandra others for his newly at nounced industrial po icy. Both he and his to important ministers were being accused of opening the economy to force capital. And if the opport tion within his party not enough, he got stick from the CPI(M) surprisingly also fromt section of the BJP whi believes in economy.

In fact, Singh's tions are limited. Will burgeoning budget della and mounting good ment expenditure, could resort to heavy rowing to keep the sal public sector and

Charts by B.K. SHARMA



productive purposes as

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Said Finance Minister Madhu dustries. adavate: "The compulsions of the round realities make it incumbent on soinvite for eign investment in certain ators in a selective way. An impression sking sought to be created that the wernment is throwing the floodgates to multinationals to swamp our momy." One thing is obvious: the overnment had finally got rid of the lergy to foreign investment. And to upport the new attitude Dandavate ints out the case of the CPI(M)-ruled Wet Bengal where private investment been allowed to step in wherever rources of the government have been and inadequate.

In fact, foreign investment in comomist countries seems to have been an apiration for the Government to open doors a bit. As against an annual breign investment of \$2.3 billion for hina, \$1.1 billion for Thailand, \$50 ion for Malaysia and \$700 million Indonesia, India has only \$200 ion. And none of these countries are compromised their political and onomicautonomy. It was in tune with is thinking that the Government has tready invited suggestions for private Westment in the power and housing ator which were closed for it earlier. If henew policy is implemented the Govament is likely to get an additional orign investment of over Rs 200 crore uring the next two years alone.

MONTEK SINGH AHLUWALIA

### **Under Attack**

IVIL servants are rarely caught in a political crossfire. But last fortnight, as the industrial polky ran into trouble, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, the Oxford-educated spe-Call secretary in the PMO and a former World Bank employee, was charged With pushing a pro-multinational and World Bank line.

Ahluwalia's when he presented a paper entitled Towards a restructuring of indushial, trade and fiscal policies" to the tore group of secretaries, which takes stock of economic trends and formu-

THE RESCUE PLAN REDUCE SUBSIDIES (At Current Prices ) 20 % CUT 1988 1989 1990 (Estimates) GET MORE FOREIGN INVESTMENT 1988 CUT DOWN PROTECTION TO INDIAN INDUSTRY 137 % 30% CUT % TARIFFS ON IMPORTS (1985)



lates an approach paper for various ministries. As the paper came up for discussion at a time when the new controversial industrial policy was being formalised, Ahluwalia too came in for attack.

Among the suggestions in the controversial paper:

- ► Public sector units which can't be revived should be closed down.
- An enterprise's ability to pay, not statutory regulations, should be the

The new industrial policy was just a part of the Government's overall economic policy which is going to unfold in the near future. The ultimate objective is to reduce the budgetary deficit to a minimum level and narrow the trade deficit. The twin objectives cannot be achieved unless there is massive reduction in the Government's unproductive expenditure and an enormous increase in exports. Last fortnight the Commerce Ministry issued directives to all the industrial units-both in the private and the public sector that they would not be allowed to import more than what was approved in their original plans. "If you don't export, you can't import" was the message.

And the Government also decided to cutits own expenditure by at least 10 per cent. All the ministries were instructed to cut down foreign travel, refrain from making fresh recruitment and close down their unproductive operations in India and abroad. And the first to act were Dandavate and Nehru who directed that overseas offices of India Investment Centres and the Tourism Department should be closed down on selective basis with immediate effect. The PMO had already prepared a list of over 300 government projects and offices which were just a drain on the Government and have to be closed down. The resultant saving: over Rs 200 crore a year. The Government has also begun reviewing the growing subsidies on agricultural and other items which consume over 30 per cent of the budget.

But Singh's success will depend on the speed with which he is able to clear the obstacles.

-PRABHU CHAWLA

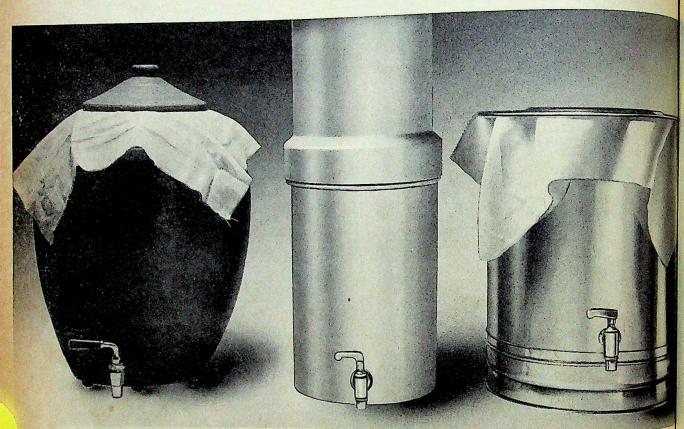
criterion for wage increases.

- Government should delicense small and medium scale projects.
- ➤ The asset limit for MRTPC companies should be raised from Rs 100 crore to Rs 300 to Rs 500 crore.
- ▶ Foreign investors should be allowed to raise their equity stake in companies up to 51 per cent if they increase their exports to 50 per cent of their turnover.

Ahluwalia was accused of influencing government thinking under pressure from the World Bank. But, in fact, his paper was just an update of one that he had earlier prepared for former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi. At that time, though, Ahluwalia was not questioned.

-PRABHU CHAWLA

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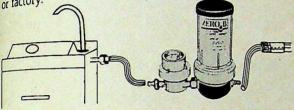
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ASSAM TEA GARDENS

### **Bitter Brew**

#### **ULFA** threatens industry

F output and profit figures were everything, then Assam's tea gardens have never had it so good. After an all-time high production of 701 million kg of tea last year and skyrocketing prices averaging Rs 25 a kg, companies are sitting on piles of cash. This year promises to be even

better: prices have jumped to Rs 40 a kg and exports are looking up.

Yet the mood in the tea industry is grim. The reason is the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA). Since the beginning of the year, ULFA has mounted a violent attack on tea gardens in Assam, most of them owned by private sector companies outside the state. Charging that companies have been making huge profits at the expense of Assam, the ULFA has demanded that all tea gardens shift their headquarters to Assam by the end of this year and reinvest their profits in the state.

On June 11, representatives of 11 major tea companies were summoned to a secret meeting near Dibrugarh and asked to pay Rs 5 lakh to the organisation. Though no one is willing to admit it, several seem to have complied with the demand. The ULFA's depredations aren't limited to extortions. Towards the end of June, it assaulted five executives of the Jokai Tea Company near Tinsukia and caned a couple in pub-

lic. And all were asked to leave Assam within a week. The last of the group left Guwahati on July 5, the day the ultimatum was to run out.

If the Assam Government hasn't moved strongly against the ULFA, it is because the demands put forward by the organisation enjoy considerable support. Says Parag Das, editor of Budhwar, a respected Guwahati weekly: "Tata Tea is making crores of

rupees in Assam but is investing the money in Haldia, West Bengal. What does Assam get in return?" The ULFA itself is widely respected. Many Assamese feel that its members are not hoodlums. but idealistic, educated youth fired with revolutionary fervour.

ULFA's supporters point out how effectively it enforced prohibition among tea garden workers. One indication of the widespread support the ULFA has, especially among bank and

ULFA activists at a training camp; (bottom) tea garden: grim portents





government employees, is that its demands for payments are backed by thorough knowledge of the bank balances, locker numbers and tax returns of tea companies.

Tea executives say that at the beginning of the year, when the ULFA intensified its activities, matters were not so bad. At first, ULFA members used to ask managers to lend them vehicles and firearms. "They were invariably

polite, took good care of the vehicles and returned them," recalls one manager. But some of the firearms and jeeps were obviously used to kill people. Now the killings have been stepped up, and the politeness has vanished.

The present crisis is easily the worst ever faced by Assam's tea estates. Even at the height of the AASU agitation in the early '80s, no pressure had been brought on the gardens. And the fear and insecurity generated by ULFA's activities are taking their toll. Most tea garden managers have sent their families out of the state. And while the big

tea companies are staying put, several of the smaller ones have begun to search for buyers.

The falling prices of tea gardens are a reflection of that. Over the past one year, prices have crashed by more than 50 per cent. Also, capital investmentin tea gardens, equipment for tea processing units and new factories has come to a standstill, with tea companies preferring to walt and watch how the situation develops.

Tea garden owners too are to blame in large measure for the anger of the Assamese and the consequent support the ULFA has managed to garner. Even Darbari Seth. chairman of Tata Tea, has readily admitted that the industry could do a lot more for the state. Many of Assam's tea gardens are yet to implement the minimum statutory wages for the 5 lakh labourers directly employed by them; 5 lakh more are employed as casual labour during the plucking season, and in all 5 million persons de pend on the tea industry for a living. Says one

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Assamese tea garden executive: such a situation, how can the Indian Tea Association justify spending Rs lakh on a single lunch?"

As long as answers to such questions aren't forthcoming, the ULFA is bound to win more support. For an industry which accounts for 60 per cent of India's tea production. flavour of the future seems acutely bitter. —UTTAM SENGUPTA in Assessment



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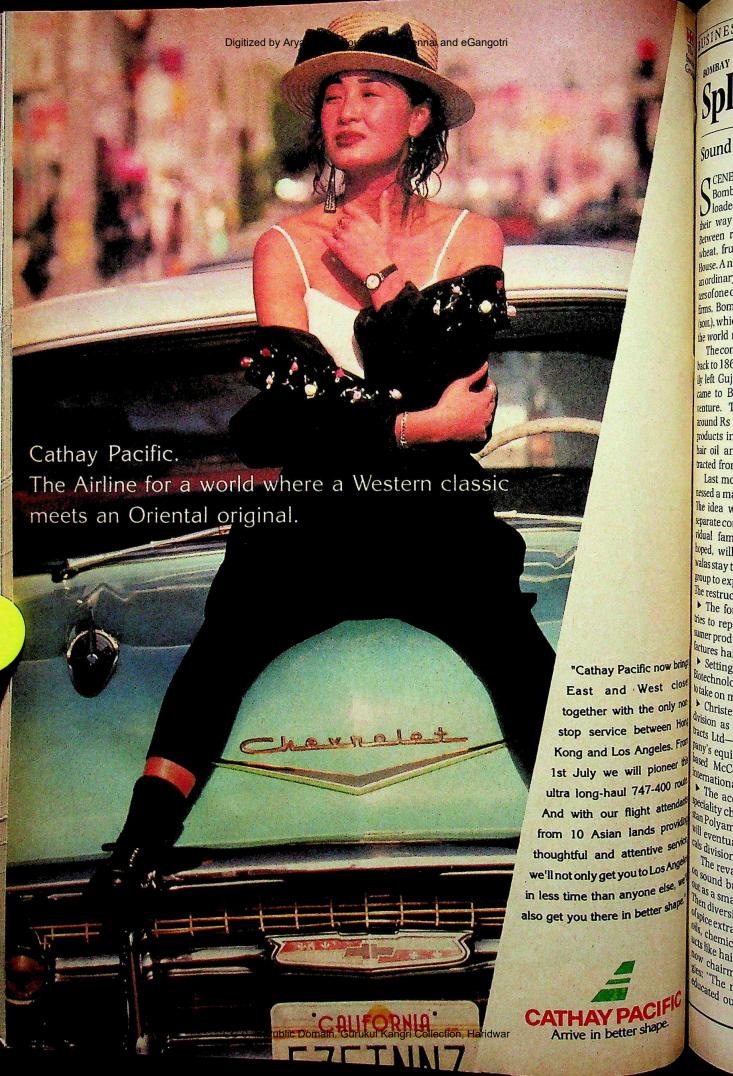
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BOMBAY OIL INDUSTRIES

### Splitting to Unite

### gound logic behind revamp of family business

CENE: a narrow bylane in Bombay's Masjid Bunder. Trucks loaded with food products honk heir way through jostling crowds. grween rows of shops selling rice, wheat, fruits and spices is Kanmoor House. A nondescript building, but not anordinary one. For it is the headquarksofone of India's oldest spice trading ms, Bombay Oil Industries Limited (NOIL), which commands 20 per cent of the world market for spice extracts.

The company's hoary history dates back to 1862 when the Mariwala famwelt Gujarat's Kachch district and ame to Bombay to start a trading renture. Today, BOIL's turnover is around Rs 150 crore. And its branded moducts include: Parachute coconut hair oil and Saffola cooking oil extracted from kardi seeds.

Last month, Kanmoor House wittessed a major restructuring exercise. The idea was to split BOIL into four sparate companies controlled by indiidual family members. This, it is loped, will not only help the Marivalas stay together but also enable the poup to expand and diversify quickly. The restructuring entails:

The formation of Marico Industies to replace BOIL's cash-rich con-Amer products division which manufactures hair oil and edible oils.

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Setting up a company called Epro Rolechnologies to make hybrid seeds biake on multinationals like ITC Ltd. Christening BOIL's spice extracts wision as Kancor Flavours and Extacts Ltd 40 per cent of this comany's equity will be held by the USased McCormick, a leader in the demational spice business.

The acquisition of a Pune-based Peciality chemicals company, Hinduan Polyamides and Fibres Ltd, which oyamides and Fibres Bio, ... <sup>cals</sup> division.

The revamping seems to be based sound business logic. BOIL started hending as a small group trading in spices. hendiversified into the manufacture spice extracts, copra products, edible chemicals, copra products, chemicals, and consumer prodto how chair oil. Says H.V. Mariwala, thairman of Epro Biotechnologies "The Bear Has been The new generation has been generation has been the new generation has outside India and their as-

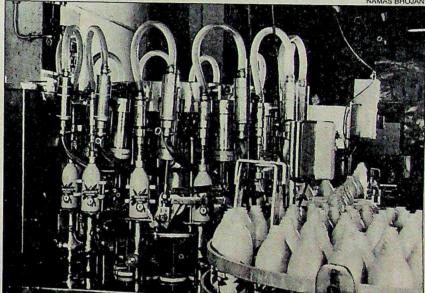
pirations are different from ours. That is why we decided to restructure the company." Also, splitting BOIL will help family members specialise in various areas.

For instance, success in selling consumer products depends on marketing efforts whereas chemicals tends to be more production and technology oriented. Even before the formal division

ture should make further divisions "painless" if any member wishes to part ways with the family.

The company is now set to make a bid for the big league. Besides hybrid seeds, they intend to manufacture a range of health foods based on herbal medicines, besides ayurvedic cosmetics. Its success in these fields hinges on marketing. The company is confident of success. Savs Harsh Mariwala who heads Marico: "We were the first to sell hair oil in plastic containers. Not only did we cut packaging costs by 10 per cent, the product is also a hit with a 60per cent market share."

The low-cholesterol Saffola too found a favourable response at a time



The expansion and diversification of Bombay Oil Industries Limited will enable them to make a bid for the big league.

of BOIL took place, the four first-generation Mariwala brothers had informally divided the company's work into four broad sections-edible oils, chemicals, botanical extracts, and spices trading.

This arrangement had to undergo changes with younger members entering the fray. Says Jayasinh Mariwala, who now heads Kancor: "Three youngsters are still studying abroad and if they wish to start new businesses, they will be given Rs 3 crore each as seed capital from the holding company to start off." BOIL will henceforth act as a holding company owning the assets of group companies for which it will be paid royalty. It will also be responsible for policy decisions on investments. Such a corporate struc-

when consumers were becoming health-conscious. Whether the recently-launched Sweekar brand sunflower oil will also be successful remains to be seen. The group also plans to sell Parachute in greater quantities in rural areas.

Not everyone is certain the group will maintain its growth momentum. Says a Bombay-based consultant: "The division is not equal. The consumer products division with a turnover of Rs 90 crore accounts for nearly three-fourth of the total turnover. So one section of the family may start feeling neglected." But the Mariwala family does not seem overly bothered by such dire prognostications.

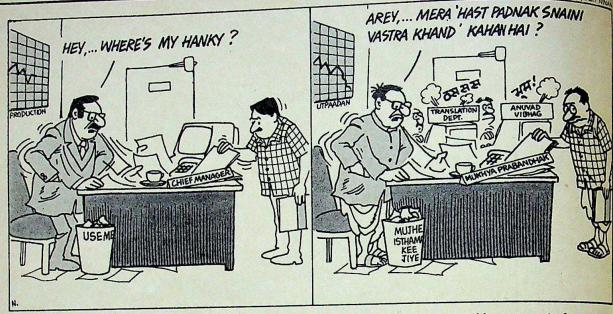
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PUBLIC SECTOR

### Mind Your Language

### Farcical touch to Hindi promotion efforts

THE word watchdog becomes 'dekhne wale kutte', an oil refinery 'shodan karyalay', and the simple handkerchief the unpronounceable 'hast padnak snajni vastra khand', that is, a piece of cloth for wiping the hands.

These are gems of the difficult art of translation picked up not from a primary student's dog-eared notebook, but from files of the Hindi cell of one of the 222 public sector undertakings in the country. The cells-manned by an estimated 25,000 Hindi officerswere formed as part of the Government's intense desire to infuse more of Hindi into the system. Much before Mulayam Singh Yadav, the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, sparked off a Hindi campaign, these officers have been serving as the sluice-gates preventing the flood of English from submerging the public sector.

Among other things, these cells have to translate official letters in English to Hindi, give Hindi lessons to staffers and conduct proficiency tests twice a year. These officers have also to teach the uninitiated at least one Hindi word a day-blackboards serve to display the day's tuition. Comments a senior manager of a Bombay-based public sector company: "These Hindi protagonists are the worst enemies of the language. The exercise is unimaginative and only seeks to push the language down people's throats." A

Hindi officer defends the programme, saying: "Hindi is our national language and we do not threaten people to learn it.'

The big brother of the Hindi implementation exercise is the Department of Official Languages attached to the Home Ministry. The Official Languages Act was enacted in 1963 and in 1976 the Government passed the official language rules. Once in two years the department publishes a manual 'Regarding the Use of Official Language Hindi.' A nugget: "Taking the minimum typing speed of 25 words per minute and after making an allowance for factors like breaks, interruptions, fatigue, subsidiary processes etc. a Hindi typist should give an output of 5,400 words per day.'

Further, under a chapter titled 'Progress of Implementation. Work' the manual questions: "How many rubber-stamps are in English only and how many are in bilingual form or in Hindi?" Comments a public sector chief: "We look at our Hindi cells as a necessary nuisance. Once a year we get inspection teams from the Department of Official Languages and all public sector units spruce up for the

That is not all. They have to also celebrate a Hindi week in August-September every year and the Indira Gandhi Raj Bhasha Shield is handed

out to public sector units for outstanding achievement in promoting the language. Says a Hindi officer: "It's difficult to evaluate the implementation of Hindi, especially in non-Hind hat's a m speaking areas. But the awards area definite incentive." It seems there has have also t been more thought given to propagating Hindi in the public sector units than to getting them to whip up some profits. The country has been carved up into three zones:

► The Ka Kshetra or 'A' zone which consists of the Hindi speaking belt of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Ma dhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Ha ryana, Delhi, and Andaman and Nico bar islands. In this sector business ha to be conducted in Hindi and then should be Hindi name-plates and rub ber-stamps. Letters which are received in English are translated and replied in Hindi only. The only concession being the annual reports which published in English and Hindi they have a wider audience"

► The Kha Kshetra or 'B' zone of sists of states like Maharashtra, Pu jab, Gujarat and Chandigarh. Accord ing to official wisdom "people in the states are familiar with Hindi but not well as people in zone A". So office correspondence is in Hindi and glish. Hindi coaching classes are obtain atory for the staff.

The Ga Kshetra or 'C' zonesouth, east and North-east-is miliar and difficult terrain for the officer. "The major difference in the states in the states is that the local language is mo popular than Hindi. So a lot of train is required," says a Hindi officer. So official correspondence is in form and name also official training the same also official training trainin and name-plates are trilingual

successful besides th employees ingclasses bay-based holiday Public ation proc Hindi. Con Hindi arriv hased in De Hindi cell inglish. Th English is Hindi befor mous wast sector chies As the mposition ment of o tempted to

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le local language also thrown in. public sector units spend an enorpous amount of money training its in the B and C zones. Hindi maching classes are conducted twice a reek throughout the year during ofthe hours. "Official work is held up," aysapublic sector executive, "and it's apaid holiday for the staff'. There are rash incentives for passing the three krels of Hindi exams conducted twice ayear. At the prabodh or the prelimipary level the students are taught the hasics, at praveen, construction of senences and grammar and at the ganya level the candidate is expected possess a working knowledge of Hindi. There is a cash incentive of 18400 for passing the prabodh exam. 8500 for praveen and Rs 600 for successful pragnya candidates. This is besides the travel allowance which employees get for attending the coachingclasses. Says R. Srinivasan, a Bomhay-based public sector officer: "We get a holiday to appear for the exam. That's a major incentive."

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Public sector units in the C zone have also to cope with complex translation procedures in order to promote Hindi. Consider this: a routine letter in lindi arrives from a public sector unit lased in Delhi. The letter is sent to the findi cell where it is translated into inglish. The C zone officers' reply in hglish is once again translated into lindi before despatch. "It's an enormous waste of time," admits a public ector chief.

As the fight for and against the imposition of Hindi rages, the department of official languages has attempted to tone down the enthusiasm dis translation staff. English words te refinery, signal, dealer, airline ad auditor are no longer translated. acidentally, Air India is believed be having a difficult time convincof the mandarins in Delhi that its alight magazine Namaskar cannot Ave a Hindi content of 50 per cent. ople in the lindia officials have pointed out dibut note that the company's logo appears in dibution and English as it is important ndi and English as it is important es are obtained national language over hakes little sense.

There is no opposition in the public Refor to implementing the Hindi lanthe conserved is the consensus is that the scheme is bally implemented. The general feelhig is that the bureaucrats have rethat the bureaucrats naveled a well-meaning exercise to probole the national language into some a mockery. -S.N.VASUKI

CONDOMS

### **Boom Time**

### Industry is growing rapidly

ONDOM manufacturers all over the country have had a moderately good time so far, but compared to what's coming, it's just been so much foreplay.

With over 1,000 million pieces every year, India is already the world's largest producer of condoms. More important, demand is growing by the night. Such has been the growth that India is poised to emerge as the leader in the international market-place as well, pushing Japan to second place.



Condom varieties: good time ahead

Quantity is not all. With rhythmic regularity, new products keep hitting the market: ultra-thin condoms, odourless condoms, spermicidal condoms, coloured condoms, ribbed condoms. Suddenly it seems there are as many varieties of condoms as there are positions in the Kamasutra. Says G. Rajamohan, executive director of the public sector Hindustan Latex Limited (HLL) based in Trivandrum: "Condoms have a great future. The growing threat of AIDS has made them more relevant than ever."

Even without that, the Indian market has terrific potential. Only 21 per cent of the country's 138.9 million eligible couples use condoms at present. If the figure were to rise to 50 per cent, demand would spurt to 5,000 million pieces a year.

HLL which makes 608 million pieces every year is the country's leading condom manufacturer, followed by London Rubber Company of the TTK group with 300 million pieces, and

Larcom Protectives Limited, a joint sector venture of the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation and TTK, with 160 million pieces.

And by the end of the year, Hindustan Latex, which has an annual turnover of Rs 25 crore, will be exporting over 89 million pieces to the Soviet Union, France and England. It is also negotiating with Canada and West Germany which are keen to import the company's 0.03 mm "skin-thin" brands marketed in India under the Moods, New Share and Rakshak labels. Unlike other condoms, New Share and Rakshak are safe even if they rupture, because they contain nonoxynol, a spermicidal that destroys sperms in six seconds. Currently produced only in the US and Japan, sper-

> micidal condoms have potentially gigantic market.

As domestic demand and export potential grow. other companies are also getting into the act. For instance, Polar Latex is setting up a Rs 10-crore plant in Balasore district, Orissa, that will produce 160 million pieces a year. Production is expected to begin in two months and Chairman S.K. Aggarwal is optimistic that the output will double over the next two years. J.K. Chemicals too may en-

ter the condom market; it has a letter of intent to manufacture 400 million pieces a year.

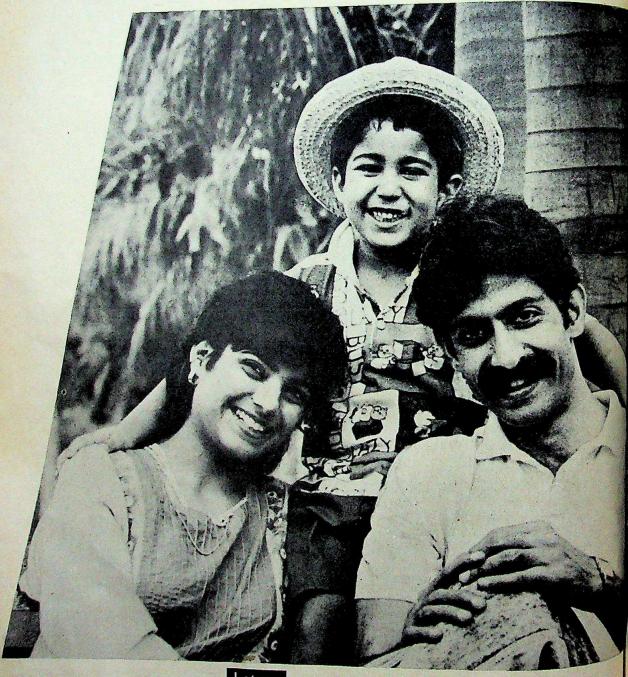
With competition in the condom market hotting up, companies are rushing to offer better quality and new products. London Rubber's new plant at Trichi, for instance, uses the sophisticated wet process to produce odourless condoms.

Frenzied marketing campaigns are another outcome of the increasing competition. For example, HLL offers mail order delivery for those who are too embarrassed to ask for condoms over the counter. And the staid inverted Nirodh red triangle has given way to bold and colourful advertisements. Says T.V. Martin, marketing manager of Polar Latex: "We are going to introduce a lot of fun and frolic into condom advertising."

That's evident already. One result is that the condom is no longer something that's furtively used in the privacy of the bedroom. It's now a consumer item that occupies pride of place in shop displays. -RAMESH MENON



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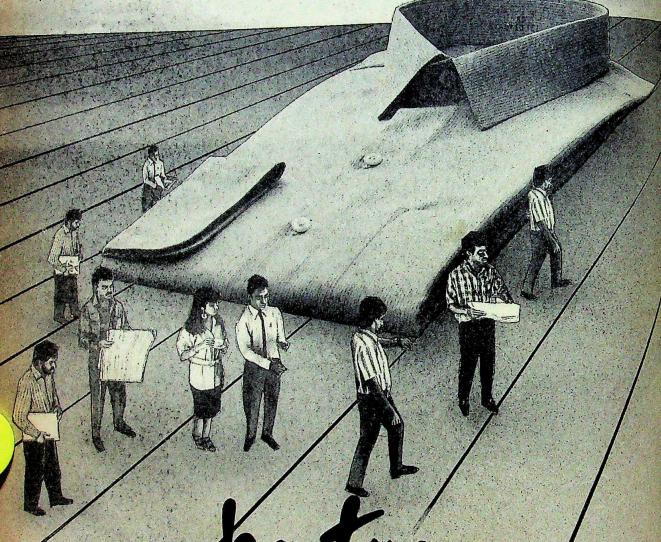
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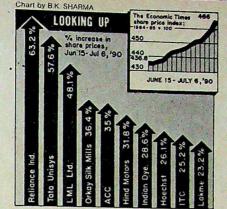
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### **Bullish Phase**

### the mood is upbeat

HE setting in of the third successive favourable monsoon has brought cheer to the country's apital markets. The values of a numbrof leading scrips staged smart rallast fortnight indicating that share markets had entered a bullish phase. Till late last month, it was hard to magine prices would zoom as they did. thurning from a visit to the capital, Bonbay Stock Exchange (BSE) Presiknt G.B. Desai and Executive Director MR. Mayya announced a series of pstrictions on trading, ostensibly to ourb speculative activity. That was before the exchange opened on July 5. but this had little impact on stock ralues. If anything, the market mood became more upbeat.

The Economic Times all-India share rice index plunged from its May 29 peak of 449.4 to 433.2 on June 14. But bereafter, the index crossed the 450 mark on June 28, and then jumped to 6 on July 6. Predictably, the 30-



scrips sensitive index of the BSE zoomed even higher. The sensitive indexwhich jumped from 781.66 on June 13 to cross 850 on June 29-soared to 862.88 on July 3, and then leapfrogged to touch 883.03 on July 6.

Never during the seven months of the National Front Government have the markets been as buoyant. Despite the raging debate on the economic policy paper prepared at the instance of Montek Singh Ahluwalia, special secretary in the PMO, investors felt liberalisation would continue. By allowing private companies to enter the power sector and by initiating steps to encourage investment in mini-steel units, the Government had certainly

HIGH LOW CLOSE

sent the right kind of signal.

All these factors contributed to the bulls going on a rampage. Leading the boom were the shares of Reliance Industries and Associated Cement Companies (ACC). After languishing at levels between Rs 60 and Rs 65 for many weeks, the Reliance scrip rose to Rs 102 on July 6 within days. The rise over the fortnight was a whopping per cent. The company's unaudited results for 1989-90, released on July 3, revealed a 25 per cent rise in net sales and a 52 per cent jump in gross profit. But net profit came down by 23 per cent, one reason being the losses incurred at the company's Patalganga plant which was flooded in July last year. Which makes the rise in the Reliance share mysterious.

The rise in the value of the ACC scrip was even more unexpected. The share skyrocketed from Rs 494 on June 15 to Rs 622 on July 3. In the next three days, it went up to Rs 667. Which meant that the price of the ACC share had more than doubled in barely three months.

Though speculators were having a field day, there was no reason to despair. For the bears had held the upper hand for too long and it was time the bulls got a chance to show their clout.

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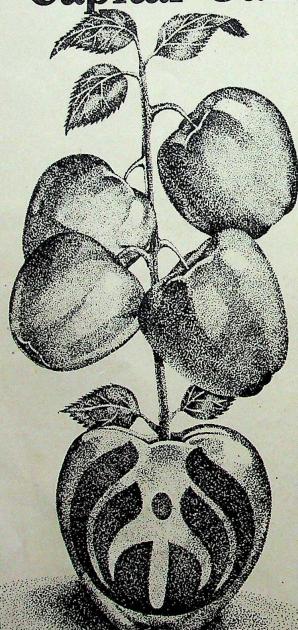
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Reliance Industries.			102.00	38.50 +	
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Shriram Fibres	71.00	43.00		6.50 +	
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SPIC	64.00	50.75	61.50	5.50 +	
Tata Steel	137.50	103.25		14.25 +	
Telco	168.50	110.00		15.50 +	
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Australia				13.8559
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Bahrain				45.6871
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Canada				14.9086
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Egypt				6.4780
France				3.1299
Hong Kong				2.2313
Indonesia				0.9384
Iran				25.2559
Italy				1.4336
Japan				11.4943
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HE question has baffled international analysts, the subminent's politicians, ipplomats and academics why can't India and pakistan. two nations with so much in common,

with so much in common, and to live in peace with each other? Why have countless rounds of discussions, accords and treaties failed to move the mutual distrust?

The answers come from a Lahore bureaucrat's teen-aged daughters. How can there be peace when Indians bavelearnt their politics from Kautilya who taught them the principle of jiski whi uski bhains (might is right) and when you Hindus call Mahmud Ghazari a plunderer while we respect him as the great idol-breaker?" Another example: "How can Pakistan trust India after it was cheated out of Kashmir by the Hindus?"

These young girls are not paricularly jingoistic India-haters. They merely represent the av-

erage Pakistani brought up on a diet of anti-India rhetoric. By the

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prejudices he has nurtured since childhood.

A factor that is hardly emphasised in India-Pakistan relations is the indoctrina-

ion of Pakistani schoolchildren. "It is Worse than what they did to kids in the Soviet Union. Our educational system is cloning generations of India-haters while the governments talk of improving relations," says a top Pakistani journalist. The evidence, he says, is available in Lahore's Urdu Bazaar where hundreds of shops sell textbooks and stationery.

Pakistan has introduced a common educational curriculum in all its
provinces, and in the English medium
the Star Special Studies Series written
by Raza-ul-Haq, M.A. A book for
Mohammed, Jesus Christ, Allama
(Jasim, the brilliant teen-aged Arab
brought Islam to the subcontinent.

There is even a chapter on Gautam

PAKISTAN

### **Lopsided Lessons**

### School texts are full of anti-India rhetoric

Buddha which ends with: "Buddha's teachings were very attractive for the low-caste people of India who were under the oppression of Brahmins."

That refrain continues up

66

"Congress leaders held that the Muslims were untouchables."

GEOGRAPHY
OF
PAKISTAN

TEXT BOOK
OF
PAKISTAN
STUDIES

SAYEED UDDIN

"Indians attacked Pakistan and begged the UN for a cease-fire. This enhanced Pakistan's prestige."

to Class X and then into college. Of how terrible Hindu society was to the lower castes and how decadent the Hindu faith, and what a refreshing change Islam brought to the subcontinent. Class VI is told: "If a Shudra was found hearing the Vedas, his ears were filled with molten lead. If he uttered a word from the Vedas, his tongue was cut off. They were put to the sword over trifles." Thus it was natural that Buddhism flourished. And why did it decline? "The Hindus acknowledged Buddha as an avatar and began to worship his image. They

distorted his teachings and absorbed Buddhism into Hinduism." The message is oblique, yet effective—that Hinduism is the greatest curse in the subcontinent's history and threatens to absorb

every other faith. Also, the Sikhs are shown as tyrannical marauders: many Urdu primers still have the portrait of a Sikh to illustrate Z for zalim (tyrant).

History is distorted. Tipu Sultan lost to the British because of the betrayal by his Hindu wazirs (ministers). The Indian National Congress was formed by the British Government with the cooperation of the Hindus. It was due to the conspiracy of Radcliffe and the Congress leaders that the innocent people of Kashmir were left at the mercy of the Hindus.

The use of history for indoctrination of students is accompanied by brazen jingoism in the form of stories of "Bharat-Pakistan" wars. For example, Class III has a chapter on

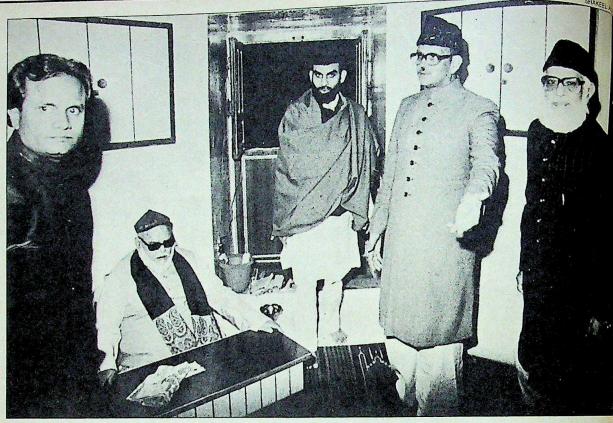
ole, Class III has a chapter on Major Aziz Bhatti, a hero of the 1965 war. Class

IV has Rashid Minhas, a hero of 1971. Class V has a chapter each on the battles of Chhamb and Sialkot sectors in 1965 where Muslim armies supposedly annihilated the Indians and treated their prisoners "generously".

On the Sialkot front the Pakistani army is also supposed to have destroyed Fakhr-i-Hind—an Indian armoured division which never existed. There is, of course, hardly any mention of the 1971 conflict except that India, which had never accepted the creation of Pakistan, resorted to war to dismember the country.

Brought up on such propaganda it is virtually impossible for even the new generation of Pakistanis to break free from the prejudices that plagued the Partition generation. India has often taken up the issue of mutual "rectification" of school textbooks with Pakistan but without success because many in Pakistan still believe that this indoctrination is necessary for their nation-building process. The problem is, it nurtures a nationalism built on the hatred of a neighbour.

-SHEKHAR GUPTA in Pakistan



### Preacher Politician

The Imam not only enjoys considerable clout with the V.P. Singh Government, but has also emerged as the most prominent spokesman of the Muslims.

E has visited Iran with the blessings of the Indian Government in an effort to counter Pakistan's attempts to rally the Islamic nations on the Kashmir issue. He has successfully exerted pressure on Prime Minister V.P. Singh to recall Jammu & Kashmir governor Jagmohan. The Government has been parleying with him on the question of leading a delegation to Srinagar to initiate a dialogue with the militants. His candidate was given a Rajya Sabha berth by V.P. Singh in the last biennial election. Another of his nominees is being considered for a post in the Janata Dal national set-up. And during the recent Chhapra parliamentary by-election—Bihar Chief Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav's constituency-thousands of copies of his letters were distributed in order to attract votes. All this within a span of two months.

Last month the growing political clout of Syed Abdullah Bukhari, the Shahi Imam of Delhi's Jama Masjid, became even more evident when, in deference to his wishes, Prime Minister V.P. Singh scuttled the appointment of what was widely expected to be a BJP shoo-in as vice-chairman of the Delhi Development Authority.

The 66-year-old Imam Bukhari has transcended his traditional role of leading the Friday evening prayer at Delhi's historic Jama Masjid. Apart from his remarkable influence over the National Front Government, he now leads a politically significant pressure group based on religion. From being a meagrely paid employee of the Waqf Board he has evolved into an aggressive Muslim leader who deliberates with senior politicians on issues affecting the country's largest minority.

And sizing up the mood of the times he advocates secularism: "No honest man can afford to endorse communalism." His reaction to a situation, his statement on an issue, acquires gra significance than is warranted by a that Kas ecclesiastical position. But this translation much mation is by no means a su Greenmen development.

It is the result of a steadily development. vacuum in the country's Muslim vacuum in the country vacuum i ship following Syed Shahabu ringsht, fo waning influence in national pur Clani Zail The Janata Dal's socialist ideal was recupe Surendra Mohan, goes even for back into history to emphasise the portance of the Imam. "It must be ! that there has been no recognised ership in the Muslim community as by secu the departure of Maulana Azad A Imam of the country's most prest mosque he (Bukhari) wields a ro amount of influence," he says.

That is no exaggeration. That's why V.P. Singh regularly set Imam's opinion. Not because the has developed impressive lead qualities overnight, but because

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Muslim Retaining out entails keeping am happy. The first the Imam visited the minister's resie it was to register protest when Jagan was sent to Srinasoon V.P. Singh ked he could not igthe Imam's indignawerthe appointment mohan.

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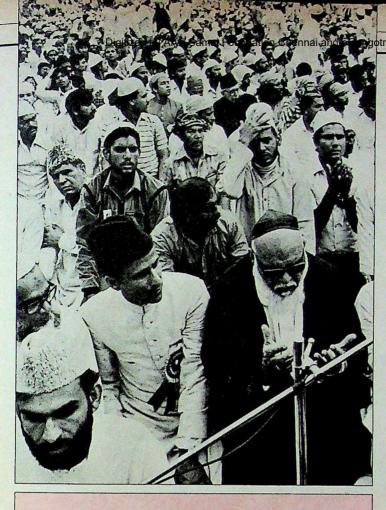
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apparently wished to explain dian position on Kashmir to d the Imam's son. The meeting anot take place. But the Imam told cquires grange regation after a Friday evening rranted by athat Kashmir is an integral part ut this man much to the relief of ans a sur Government.

at the Imam's concerns trandily development of the deligious issues is evident from the senior politicians who call on him. Shahabut attnight, for instance, former Presational pos Gani Zail Singh visited Bukhari was recuperating after an asthma In anticipation of a mid-term one Congress(I) leaders too are la repair the ruptured links with Jana Masjid. M.J. Akbar, who ecognised as by Secularism, sought an apmmular secularism, sought an ap-na Azad Buth Bukhari which was na Azar ed Buta Singh recently rang up nost product Singh recently rang up vields a second vite both father and son to a less[i] convention against com-As the home minister you are ing at riots and now you are arly seeding at riots and now you are sause the last general elections



he Imam's growing political influence is a result of the developing vacuum in the country's Muslim leadership.

> when the popular mood was increasingly turning against the ruling Congress(I), Bukhari had to make a tough choice between that party and the Janata Dal. Repeated communal flareups, alleged police atrocities on Muslims and, finally, the shilanayas for the Ayodhya temple about a month before the polls, reduced his options. But at the same time, the fact that V.P. Singh was forging an electoral alliance with the BJP put the Imam in a dilemma.

> N the weeks before the elections, leaders of both the Congress(I) and the Janata Dal went all out to seek the Imam's 'blessings'. Home minister Buta Singh, local Congress(I) strongman H.K.L. Bhagat, Delhi's Lt-Governor Romesh Bhandari and Rajiv Gandhi's political aide R.K. Dhawan, all did their utmost to bring Bukhari to the Congress(I) fold.

> Not to be outdone, the then opposition stalwarts-Ajit Singh, Devi Lal and above all V.P. Singh-held long sessions with the Imam. It was eventually Singh's one-to-one meetings with the

Imam that clinched the issue, for the two men developed a personal rapport and finally Bukhari's support was more for the 'Raja Saheb' than for the Janata Dal.

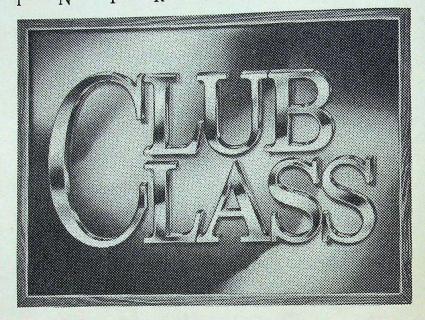
On November 11, with just about a fortnight to go for polling day, Bukhari announced his diktat at a crowded press conference. All Muslims, he said. should support the Janata Dal. The overwhelming Muslim support to the party-evident from its wins in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar-underlined the Imam's indispensability for a minority govern-

Shahabuddin-who at the peak of the Babri Masjid agitation sought to project himself as the undisputed leader of the Muslim community-maintained an ambivalent attitude towards the Dal. The result was that his newly launched Insaaf Party came a cropper and he himself was defeated. Mohammad Afzal, Janata Dal Rajva Sabha member, offers an explanation: "While Imam

Saheb articulates the sentiments of the community, others make the mistake of trying to mould them according to their own perceptions.'

The growing stature of the Imam has considerably altered equations within the Muslim community. A group of leaders in the 35-45 age group has come into the limelight. Unlike Shahabuddin-or even earlier Farooq Abdullah-who endeavoured to emerge as the sole deliverer of the Indian Muslims, these leaders have not challenged the supremacy of the Imam. Rather, during the past few years of the Babri Masjid movement they sought his patronage to come into prominence.

This group of Young Turks-some of whom had their political initiation at the Aligarh Muslim University—has always been anti-Congress(I). It comprises Javed Habib, Zafaryab Jilani, Mohammad Azam Khan and Mohammed Afzal with Ahmed Bukhari at the centre. Going by the decision-making process at the Jama Masjid these days it seems that Bukhari wants to groom these younger leaders to pre-empt



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Another strand of leadership repreented by Muslim League leader G.M. Sanatwala seems to have lost much of sappeal and relevance. "There can be taslim leaders in other political paricies but certainly they will not solely gree the community's cause." This

proposition of the veteran proposition of the veteran proposition of the veteran proposition of the veteran proposition leader-dip. Azam Khan, once in the lak Dal, is now a minister in the Mulayam Singh Yadav Cabinet in Uttar Pradesh. When V.P. Singh offered an Toper House berth to Ahmed, the Imam rejected it—and the Imam rejected it—and the Imam rejected it—and the Imam rejected it—and the Imam rejected it—the Imam rejected it—and the Imam r

ditor of a well-known Urdu paper.

The new group of leaders sits together to take an important decision addren places the proposal before the lam for final approval. Commenting as the new leadership Afzal says: While the elders are protectionist in attude, the new leadership is keen to gain something more." Obviously the lection-ridden Muslim leadership is at a cross-roads now. The Young Turks ander the protective wings of the lam are only another experiment.

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But undoubtedly they have certain divantages. Unlike the elders

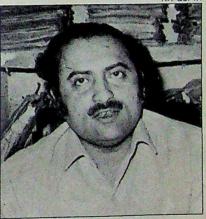
they are fiercely pragmatic and believe in a straight quid to quo. They are also not averse to mainstream politics, but their real allegiance is to the Imam. And certainly they have neither Shahabudin's egotism nor Banatalas aloof recourse to the

Vala's aloof recourse to the corridors of Parliament. Some of them are from the control of the corridors of

That, however, does not entitle them to any claim to lofty idealism. The continue his support to the Janata Dal continue his support to the Janata Dal







R.K GUPT

### he new leaders groomed by the Imam are not averse to joining the political mainstream.

option to criticise it. "There is still enough love in my heart for Raja Saheb. But because of the bloodshed in Kashmir his image has suffered. We will certainly not support him in future if he goes for an alliance with any communal party including the BJP," he told INDIA TODAY.

The Imam feels that despite his honest intentions Singh has not been able to fulfil his pledges to the minor(From top to bottom) Azam Khan; Javed Habib, and Zafaryab Jilani: anti-Congress(I)

ities because of the BJP pressure. "His fundamental mistake was the seat adjustment with the BJP; otherwise that party would not have got 86 seats," he says. Last fortnight Ahmed had a long meeting with the prime minister in which he gave an ultimatum of sorts: unless efforts are made to fulfil some of the assurances Singh made to the community a new agitation will be launched in August. In fact, a convention of Muslim leaders in the Opposition is being planned.

The Imam and this new group seem to have a love-hate relationship with the new regime. Despite his periodic complaints and loud protests, the Imam's support for the new regime has not waned yet. During the Chhapra by-election, a youth resembling Ahmed Bukhari exhorted Muslims to vote for the Janata Dal. That the Dal fared well in the recent by-elections has also been attributed to the continued

Muslim support.

The new leaders have proved hard bargainers. Before the assembly elections Bukhari urged Singh to ensure proper Muslim representation in the Janata Dal Legislature Party in states like Bihar, Gujarat and Rajasthan.

Whether the Imam is satisfied with the number and profiles of Muslim ministers at the Centre or in the states is not known but he is certainly overjoyed by the performance of the Uttar Pradesh and Bihar chief ministers, Mulayam Singh Yadav and Laloo Prasad Yadav. Among the

Prasad Yadav. Among the Imam's friends in the Dal are both the Yadavs, Surendra Mohan, Rashid Masood and Devi Lal apart from Singh himself. But ironically, not Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, the country's first Muslim home minister. Despite the

Mufti's initial efforts to befriend the Imam, Abdullah Bukhari is now one of the home minister's most bitter critics. Remarks one of his proteges: "Rajmohan Gandhi would have made a much better home minister."

At a time when the political mainstream itself is in a state of flux Muslim politics has, without a shadow of doubt, entered a new phase,

-BHASKAR ROY

FTER grappling with the self-made dilemma created by the grounding of 14 Airbus A 320s for nearly five months, the National Front Government has taken refuge behind the

final recommendations of the Ramdas Committee report submitted last fortnight to get out of the sticky situation.

Using this report as a panacea for the ills that affect the Indian Airlines (IA), Union Minister for Civil Aviation, Arif Mohammed Khan, announced that the much-maligned fly-by-wire air-

craft would be re-inducted in a phased manner from mid-July.

This decision, however, is already being seen as a political gaffe, as the very committee whose report was cited to ground these aircraft, causing IA a loss of around Rs 50 crore, is now unashamedly being quoted to resume operations.

Justifying his hasty decision to

AIRBUS A 320

# **About Turn**

### Government reneges on its earlier stand

was safe to fly. This was endorsed by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation and other leading aviation authorities from the developed world. Khan too accepted it. Says he: "At no point of time have I questioned the airworthiness of

the issue to whip for prime minister Rajiv dhi, however, chosel them and nounced in Parlian to put a

that no decision would receip so taken on the A 320sth which reing into the cause of the Bange coby the a crash, presented its findings. In anoust is yet to contradictory move, the Civil Avia hecomm Ministry decided to lease out the shward grant and call the shward grant grant and call the short grant g grounded aircraft and sell the radiostore planes awaiting delivery. Subsequent doubly as a

IA floated a global tender to lease the A 320s.

However, the poor responsed TVEN the tender received and the three a lawsuit from Airbus Indus which claimed that IA did not his A 320s the right to lease out aircraft tain a mon they did not own fully, in addition is fleet of ! the stiff pressure applied by Live lenged by major unions, forced the Cabine Vayudoot. back down.

Realising it had derived as mall aircr



ground the aircraft soon after the Bangalore crash, Khan says: "Even if the planes were safe, I had to dispel doubts in the public mind and decided to get the verdict of an expert independent body over which we had no control.'

Realising the loss the exchequer would suffer, the Ramdas Committee submitted its interim report as early as March 5, within seven days of it being set up. Its recommendations were unequivocally in favour of a phased re-induction of the A 320s.

Top civil aviation officials say the Government kept the aircraft grounded despite two crucial cabinet notes to the contrary, which were discussed in March. The first note dealt with the aircraft's airworthiness and concluded—on the basis of the findings of the Digital Flight Data Recorder and Cockpit Voice Recorder—that the A 320

he Ramdas Committee report, cited to ground the aircraft, is now being quoted to resume operations.

the A 320." The second and more significant note dealt with IA's preparedness to induct these aircraft. Its conclusion echoed the interim recommendations of the Ramdas Committee.

Says P.C. Sen, the then acting managing director of IA: "If IA had geared up to implement the Ramdas Committee's interim recommendations, there would have been no difficulty in reinducting the A 320s."

The Government, adamant on using

Airbus A320; and Khan: surprise

political mileage as possible for issue, the Cabinet reneged on its decision of waiting till the Bhat Co sion submitted its report and det re-induct the aircraft. This obtained was a step that could have easily taken three months ago.

Even the Indian Commercial Association, which had issued tive to its members that they sho operate the airliner till the cause accident was ascertained, did face. The association claims that drew the earlier directive becal prime minister assured that would not be compromised. cantly, all the 147 A 320 pilots had given interest-free loans of B each recently to help them domestic expenses.

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le Civil Avia he committee has also insisted that lease out the committee has also insisted tha found to the problem of water seepage into the avionics bay. This seepage was suspected to be one of the causes for the computers fouling up. But this will undoubtedly require a major modification in the aircraft's interior and cannot be done immediately.

Meanwhile, the entire A 320 fleet which is to be re-inducted by October this year will be largely operated on the major trunk sectors such as Bombay-Hyderabad which already have adequate capacity. This is against the original role defined for these aircraft as IA had primarily acquired them to extend its services to smaller airports which had a greater demand but limited capacity.

Another aspect is that the decision of the Cabinet has nullified the justification for filing the FIR in the Airbus deal which suspected the aircraft to be substandard. Also, it has not been explained as to why people are being questioned about the Airbus purchase if the aircraft is considered airworthy? Clearly, the Government is flying straight into yet another controversy.

-W.P.S. SIDHU

or response TVEN as the headless 37and the three year-old Indian Airlines irbus Indus (IA) re-introduces the Air-IA did noth his A 320s and fights to main-

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out aircraft lain a monopoly over 67 routes, using ly, in addition its fleet of 50 aircraft, it's being chalplied by List laged by an unlikely contender d the Cabine Vayudoot. The 10-year-old feeder airine, operating 78 stations with just 21 derived as mall aircraft, is making inroads into

a'slucrative trunk routes. The ire is a greater share of the k1,200-crore domestic marlet which, according to one stimate, is growing at a rate of 12 per cent a year.

What irks 1A is that it has to ace competition from an airhein which it has invested Rs ll.53 crore and which is reorted to have notched up a amulative loss of Rs 50 crore.

That's a conservative estimate, Vayudoot has produced

list one balance sheet so far and accounts are available for only eight iars. Even these reveal that for six tars the airline has been making a to have made marginal months only in 1983-84 and 1984-85. Worse, the airline, according to

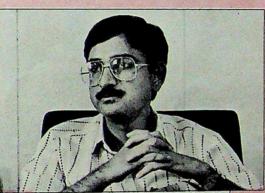
anaging Director Harsh Vardhan mself, has abandoned 23 of its staons after losing four aircraft in lashes. So today the airline is serviconly 78 of the 101 stations it had kned with much fanfare.

Harsh Vardhan himself has been der attack. The Central Vigilance Onnission charged him with misus-Aghis authority and said he was "not Orthy of holding positions of high Sponsibility in public service". But it Raks Volumes for Harsh Vardhan's olitical connections that despite ayudoot's shoddy performance the overnment allowed it to expand its rations to the trunk routes, a hange from its original brief of conVAYUDOOT

## **Grandiose Moves**

necting inaccessible areas of the North-east and stations not served by 1A. Union Minister for Civil Aviation

Harsh Vardhan: shrewd operator



PRASHANT PANJIAR

Despite its shoddy record, Vayudoot has got into the trunk routes due to Harsh Vardhan's machinations.

Arif Mohammed Khan justified the decision, saying the Government was planning to redefine Vayudoot's role.

Vayudoot made its first move into IA's turf after the grounding of the A 320s. It started a late night Delhi-Bombay flight using a Boeing 727 on wet lease (which means pilots were hired along with the aircraft) from the Royal Nepal Air Corporation. It also got an assurance from the Civil Aviation Ministry that IA would not be allowed to approach Royal Nepal for a similar lease. Moreover, Vayudoot was allowed to

give a 25-per cent discount on the flight starting at 10.30 p.m. whereas normally discounts are only allowed for flights starting between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. Then it leased a 190-seater Boeing 757 at \$2,750 (Rs 48,000) per

hour, a rate aviation experts say is too high, and put it on the Delhi-Bombay route. Boeing 727 was then put on the Delhi-Bangalore route, offering a 10-per cent discount even though it is a day flight.

Harsh Vardhan claims that both routes have a load factor of 80 per cent while the breakeven point is around 68 per cent. He claims that the Delhi-Bombay route is generating a profit of Rs 6 lakh a month,

while the Delhi-Bangalore route has shown a marginal profit for the last couple of weeks.

IA officials, however, aren't convinced. They say that IA's peak load factor is just 75 per cent. Even Air India which operates 83 domestic services a week, many of them at night with the 25 per cent discount, is barely breaking even despite a load factor of 70 per cent.

Undaunted by the barrage of criticism and confident of continued political patronage, Harsh Vardhan has ambitious plans to launch four more flights on important domestic routes, a Cochin-Sharjah flight, and acquire four 114-seater BAC-111 on wet lease from Romania.

While IA may be able to counter this new challenge, Vayudoot, thanks to the political machinations of its managing director, has won round one. -W.P.S. SIDHU

and RAGHU NANDAN DHAR

OR three roller-coaster weeks we Indians have been treated to some real football. Never in our history have we been so collectively hooked on an international sporting event. And this was a tournament in which India wasn't even participating, with telecasts continuing into the wee hours of the morning.

If the 14th World Cup proved anything it was the pull and power of modern sport. Cameroon's performance showed how 22 men can etch the name of a hitherto unknown nation into world consciousness. Also the reach of good television. For once Doordarshan excelled itself. Aberrations like Arijit Sen and former Indian captain Brahmananda exchanging sweet nothings during breathers could be ignored as minor irritations.

Overnight we Indians, so parochial in our sporting preferences, had a whole set of international heroes. Names that would have been tonguetwisters till the other day were dropped by every

Seeing is

Believing

The exposure to the

world's best should make

the pathetic state of Indian

soccer clear to all. Now

having watched the real

stuff, fans will see through

the fraud perpetrated by

the sham professionalism

of Calcutta football.

school child: Valderrama, Burruchaga, Omam-Biyik, Makanaky, Ruud Gullit, Rudi Voeller, and Peter Shilton, the 41year-old Rock of Gibraltar in the English goal.

For once the talk was not about Srikkanth's exclusion. Bishen Bedi's boasts or Kapil's aching knee. For a brief period, we rose above our cricket mania, and talked of Italian speed, German efficiency, the English tenacity and Argentine luck. Matthaeus' ball control. Skurahvy's opportunism, Milla's mesmerism and Maradona's force-multiplier effect. For once, we were talking sport and not the politics of sport.

Yet it is not as if Indians had discovered an entirely new sporting craze. For despite all the hoopla about cricket, football remains the most popular game in India. In Calcutta and Calicut, in Margao and Delhi, people throng by the thousands to watch the half-dozen or so national tournaments, even paying money. The only other game to draw better gates is cricket, and that only in international matches. Domestic cricket is down to what Sunil Gavaskar once said of English county cricket: "Who watches it but a couple of beer-drinking old Englishmen and a few dogs?" Isn't it doubly shameful then that the only game that the poor Indian is prepared to pay and watch has no Indian heroes? The best star on the "Indian" soccer scene is Nigerian Chima Okerie.

The exposure to the world's best can have two consequences for Indian soccer. Maybe, having developed a new love for the working class sport, Indians will get more interested in watching—and playing—it more seriously. Or maybe, having seen the real stuff now they will see through the kind of

fraud perpetrated on them by the sham professionalism of Calcutta football—what with fixed matches, attacks on referees, and a hopelessly defensive approach to the game. For many heart-broken fans Indian football could cease to exist after the revelation of Italia '90.

How much of a revelation it has been for Indian footballers and sport officialdom in general is another matter. None of the usual excuses, lack of funds, facilities, playgrounds applies to football, the cheapest sport of all. Anyone who has seen the namby-pamby soccer encounters of the Calcuta kind would have no doubt that, at least in the near future, India has no chance of even qualifying for the World Cup.

Few remember that in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics India finished fourth, losing to Bulgariain the play-off for the bronze. Since 1964 we have not even qualified for the Olympics. In 1951 and 1962 we won the Asiad gold, in 1970 the bronze. This year



we may not even play in Beijing. In 1987 we took pride in winning the gold in the South Asian Federation Games. Last year we finished third behind Pakistan and Bangladesh. Now even Madives is catching up with us. And yet Indian footballers have got away with the crassest prima donnaism. Witness the repeated walkouts by the "stars" from national teams. Contrast the contempor of Yugoslav coach Gary Milovan who, badgered in Seven different stars demanding captaincy, played each one of them as captain in seven matches in the 1984 pre-Olympic qualifying tournament.

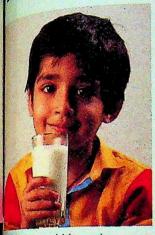
But who's bothered? Not the officials who continue to get their junkets. Not the clubs which hold aloft the banner of professionalism. Certain not the players who beat Haryana politicians in the craft of defection. Who's bothered as long as off lakh suckers still flock to the Salt Lake Stadium cheer club sides weaving about aimlessly in midfield with the odd African breaking the month ony with a goal?

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# **Testing Time Ahead**

### A jaded team looks for miracles on the English tour

OT so long ago an Indian cricket team visiting England was dismissed as a "ragtag and bobtail outfit". But the team defied all-round derision to level the series 1-1 and finish the tour with a glorious 400-plus chase in the fourth innings at the Oval

Cartoon by AJIT NINAN and ANIL SHARMA



Azharuddin is suspect against pace and the batting is yet to prove its staying power without Gavaskar's solidity.

and returned to the accompaniment of headlines like "Sunny Shines India." This is one of the more stirring chapters of Indian cricket history. Last fortnight when Mohammed Azharuddin's still 'experimental' team began another Indian campaign in the Blighty it was being dismissed with similar nonchalance.

Nothing short of the 1982 miracle is required if the team has to prove its many critics wrong. But one look at the team shows that Azharuddin, on his second full foreign tour as captain just does not seem to have adequate re-

sources. He has a spin attack largely untried abroad and lacking penetration on anything less than a minefield of a pitch. His pace spearhead, Kapil Dev, looks jaded while the others are still new to English conditions. The batting continues to be an enigma and is yet to recover from the loss of Gavaskar. Australian captain Allan Border summed up the experts' opinion of this Indian team: "This team is a shadow of its former self. They really miss Gavaskar and the accuracy of the old Kapil Dev. Anybody can beat them today.'

Border may be exaggerating a bit as an Indian team did recently come out of a full series in Pakistan unscathed. But for a long time now India has lacked the firepower to win a Test.

Azharuddin's team has excessive dependence on untried leg spinners and the omission of Krishnamachari Srikkanth, who could have given some sting to the top will rankle. The selectors have gambled in opting for part-time opening partners for Navjot Singh Sidhu in W.V. Raman and Manoj Prabhakar. If Prabhakar is to open the batting as well as the bowling attack, he will be overburdened. Even Ravi Shastri may be called upon to open.

Of the middle order batsmen, Dilip Vengsarkar will be under severe stress: it is a make or bust tour for him after the humiliation he has been subjected to by sirkar ha ful 50s be ple patch.

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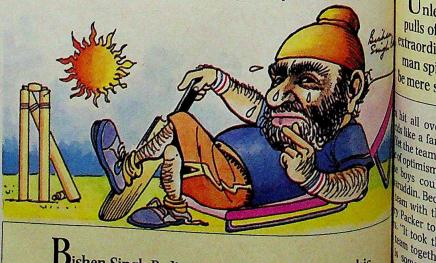
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he pressure on a slower Kapil will increase if Prabhakar and Wassan fail to adjust quickly to English conditions.

the selectors. The Colonel should in be driven by an urge to make a point the selectors besides getting a l record fourth century at lo Azharuddin himself has a lot to prohe is considered suspect on seat pitches. Also under hard scrutiny teen prodigy, Sachin Tendulkar. too much is being expected of himaccording to the English press, b ing of Gary Sobers' all-time high

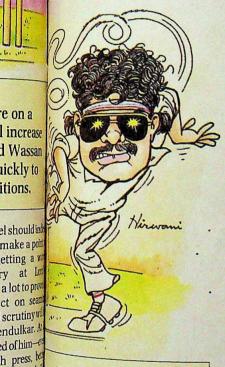


Bishen Singh Bedi, never a great tactician in his playing days, is now the one-man brains trust, gagging the captain and curbing initiative down the line.

ed 365 not out. Every move he ab Watched. There is much presbig scores again hith two big scores against Kent. sakoshown an impetuous streak.

Manager Bishen Singh Bedi, wants to "let the boy play his and learn from his mistakes".

began with a defeat against whire but later defeated Kent by wickets. The good news is that Manjrekar regained his lost with an excellent century, and arkar had already cracked two 50s besides Tendulkar hitting pepatch. But Indian bowling has



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 $\bigcup_{ ext{nless}}$  Hirwani pulls off something extraordinary the fourman spin squad will be mere stock bowlers.

bit all over the place and that slike a familiar story.

the team management strikes a optimism. "Given enough time. boys could do wonders," says ddin. Bedi compares the state of An with that of Australia's after Packer took away most of their It took them some time to put tan together again and all I ask some more time," is his plea. ay not have much longer than the weeks in England to prove

SALIL TRIPATHI

TENNIS

### **Master Stroke**

#### Paes is the new hope

FTER several months of monotonously depressing news, Indian sports fans finally had something to celebrate. Leander Paes, the dusky, aggressive 17-year-old from Calcutta, defied form, critics and his own 11th seeding to win the junior Wimbledon championship and join the illustrious club of two other Indians who have held the title: Ramanathan Krishnan (1954) and his son Ramesh Krishnan (1979). Given the standard of international tennis today, it is too early to herald the birth of a star but Paes has at least arrived as India's brightest tennis hope since Ramesh Krishnan.

It was fitting that the first compliments for his victory came from Ramanathan Krishnan: "We welcome him to the club of junior Wimbledon title winners and hope that some more boys and girls join what has been an exclusive family club." India's Davis Cup Captain Naresh Kumar who was at Wimbledon called it a "great event for Indian tennis".

At first, it seemed as if Paes would lose Wimbledon as he did the Australian Junior Open final at Melbourne in January. After being up 5-0 in the first set, Paes slipped and his South African rival Marcus Ondruska levelled at 5-5. Paes then unleashed some powerful forehands to win the set 7-5. But he lost the second 2-6, and had to fight harder after the score was 3-3, in the third set, before he managed to win the final set 6-4, and with it his first major title.

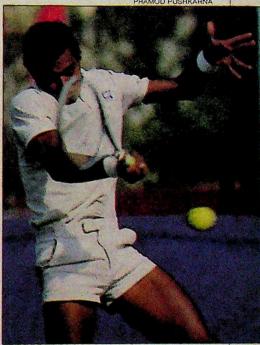
Leander Paes first picked up a tennis racket when he was six, under the watchful eyes of his father Vece Paeswho played for the Indian hockey team at the Munich Olympics and has been part of the game's think tank through the '80s. But only in the last five years has Paes been shaped into the finest product of the Britannia Amritraj Trust (BAT) Tennis Academy in Madras. Exulted BAT's Director and mother of the Amritraj brothers Margaret Amritraj: "We are delighted. Leander is proving that tennis schools are the answer for improving the game in the country.'

The sprightly Leander Paes has not looked back since he signed the contract with BAT and has made steady progress. By 1987 he was number one among the under-14s, bagged the national sub junior title and the All India Hard Court championship. International exposure after that helped hone his skills and of course there was BAT's coach David O'Meara to help him fine-tune his game, develop the powerful forehand and to cover the court well.

Powerful strokes and crisp volleying at the net are the hallmarks of Leander's game. But as O'Meara who was with Paes at Wimbledon puts it: "His serving style and rhythm have to improve and the best way is to make it to the senior level soon." Krishnan says he is looking forward to seeing Paes play at the U.S. Open this year.

Even Vece Paes, perhaps Leander's fiercest critic, feels more matches will

PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

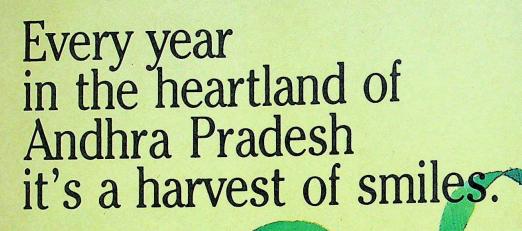


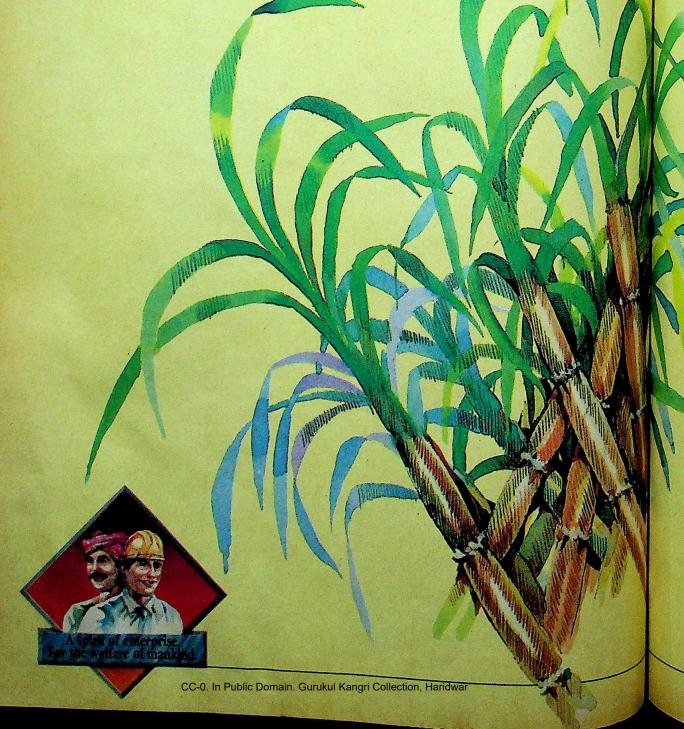
Paes: smashing win

improve his game. He is also helping Leander devise a scientifically combined regimen of diet and courtcraft. Leander has virtually become a vegetarian after scaling down on the high protein diets. Even though he has an incredibly mature approach to the game, his father feels that he is also capable of acting like a kid. But with a father who is also a tough teacher the son will obviously learn fast. "He has improved his backhand and given our conditions it is good enough if he peaks at 23," says papa Paes.

Yet modern tennis is a game for the young, where brash adolescents scorch the courts and pocket millions. The junior Wimbledon victory will of course launch Paes to the higher, starry realms of tortuous tennis where only the aces survive.

-AMARNATH K. MENON with bureau reports





This is the saga of a company over four decades old. The Andhra Sugars. Established in August, 1947. A modest sugar factory that began production in 1952 with a capacity of 600 tonnes per day, now crushes 5,000 tonnes per day. A quantum leap in capacity and a definite indicator of growth.

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Identifying the need for fertilizer, a super phosphate plant was set up in 1960, with a capacity of 100 tonnes per day. Apart from fertilizer, sulphuric acid, caustic soda, caustic potash, chlorine, hydrochloric acid, chlorosulphonic acid and alum are produced at the inorganic chemicals complex at Kovvur.

Yet another sterling enterprise of The Andhra Sugars, is the Aspirin plant, contributing a major share in the annual production of Aspirin in the country.

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whe bitter debate that would follow. nd though last fortnight the oneontario Human Rights Commison ruled that Sikhs must be allowed nearly kirpans to school, the controhas far from blown over.

The issue which virtually polarised ck-outs. We nation, with Canada's 250,000

CANADA

# Daggers Drawn

#### Kirpan issue polarises the nation

Viking helmet and another a veil are becoming popular and an anti-kirpan lapel pin is being designed.

Some academics see a link between the hype generated by the issue and the fears of secession (a majority in Quebec

Baisakhi procession in Toronto

the traditions of the country you live in," says Ivor Levstein, a Toronto realestate lawyer. In fact, there are plans afoot to challenge the turban order too. Ken Riley, a former policeman, is collect-

ing funds to challenge the verdict which he says is unfair to religions that don't display visible signs.

Yet Sukhdev Hundal and Harbhajan Singh Pandori, the president of the Ontario Khalsa Darbar, have been getting support from some politicians anxious to cash in on Sikh votes during

Photograph by KULDIP VIRDI Liberty Photos/Toronto



hisbanding together to ies for their rights, is ound to stay alive as the ider is likely to be chalnged in court. It is also to further inflame anadians, who've alady been fuming over a

decision giving Sikhs in the dal Canadian Mounted Police the wear turbans. A Gallup Poll they has found that 68 per cent posed the new policy.

The controversy has fetched top nginthemedia. Wide coverage has th given to the racist mudslinging it h Oh Oh Oh T-shirts emblazoned Oh Canada'' depicting five Canada" depicting a policemen, one wearing a deson, one wearing policemen, one wearing a turban, one braids, one a

The debate about the use of kirpans and turbans has led to much racist mudslinging against the Sikhs.

> province support independence from Canada). Says O'Connel, editor of Sikh History and Religion in the Twentieth Century: "At present Canada as a cohesive country is probably more at risk than the Sikh panth worldwide.'

While Sikhs are celebrating wildly over the kirpan victory, most Canadians are dismayed, just as they were when the Sikhs won the right to wear the turban. "The Sikhs should appreciate that some times it's best to adapt to the Ontario provincial poll to be held later this year. Says Jim Karygiannis, Liberal MP who was voted to power on the strength of Sikh votes: "The kirpan is nothing to be scared of. I'd be more scared of a gun

under someone's jacket.'

The unfortunate fallout of the fracas, according to O'Connel, is that instead of addressing the real threat to unity, Canadians are "scapegoating a dynamic sector of the populace". The growing frictions are bound to pit the Sikhs, admired in Canada for their enterprise, in a long, perhaps even wasteful duel against an ethnically diverse yet liberally accommodating society. - SATINDER BINDRA in Toronto

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Kashmiris: Refugees in their own country



Jagmohan: Right or wronged



Menaka Gandhi: Fighting against odds



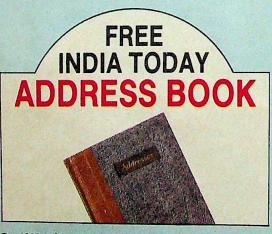
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# ruggling to Survive

# gowing role in politics but slow economic growth

ALAYSIA'S 1.4 million-odd Indians find themselves in a paradoxical situation. Econocally, they have been overtaken by Alfalays and the Chinese. But politii, they have grown in importance. the splintering of Malaysia's minant political parties, Indians homake up almost 10 per cent of the quiation—are being actively wooed the ruling bumiputras (sons of

The irony is compounded by the at that the divisions in the Indian mmunity have widened. The Malayin Indian Congress (MIC) headed by Samy Velluis witnessing dissensions the top. And caste feelings have wwn. All this points to the Indian ate getting splintered. Nevertheless, dians can influence the result in tore than a third of Malaysia's 177 rliamentary constituencies.

Though general elections are due aly in October 1991, Malaysia has a agtradition of calling elections well wore schedule. For the first time, the ininant Malay community is split tee ways: the ruling United Malay ational Organisation (umno), the ndamentalist Pan-Malaysian Is-

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lamic Party and the Opposition front called Semangat '46 (Spirit of '46).

The MIC—aligned with the ruling umno-is divided. One group headed by M.G. Pandithan joined ranks with the Opposition in February. Also, Vellu's relations with the second and third most important party functionaries, S. Subramaniam and Dato Pathmanaban, are strained. While Pathmanaban describes the infighting as "brotherly jostling", opposition MPs like Karpal Singh of the Democratic Action Party-who was responsible for publicising the D.P. Vijandran videotape scandal (see box)-charge Vellu with "dismembering" the party.

Others derisively describe Vellu as Mr Third Fiddle or Mr Ten Per Cent (the proportion of Indians in the population) and complain that despite having been a part of the official establishment for decades, he has failed to fulfil the aspirations of Indians.

Indians in Sabah and Sarawak came to Malaysia in the 14th and 15th centuries and have been fully integrated with bumiputra society. How-

Store full of Indian goods: cultural affinities with homeland

ever, when one talks of Malaysian Indians today, one refers mainly to the Tamils who came at the end of the last century and the beginning of this century as indentured labourers to work in rubber and palm plantations.

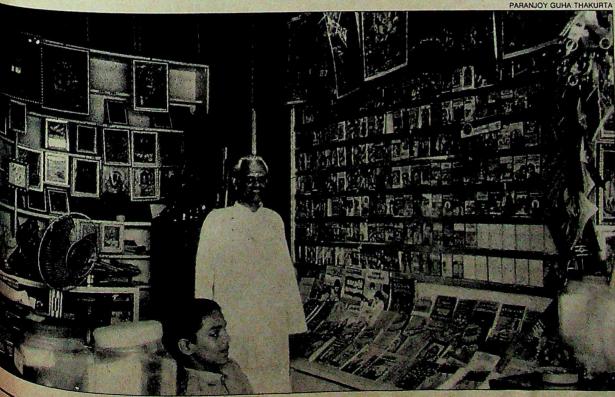
"The plantations enslaved the workers and kept them in enclaves; to an extent the enclave mentality persists even today," says Pathmanaban, deputy minister for labour. Thus, though over 30 per cent of Malaysia's doctors and lawyers are Indians, the overwhelming majority of Indians are poor by local standards.

Not by Indian standards, though. Most families would probably own a two-wheeler. And in a larger plantation, some would own refrigerators. But alcoholism is rampant among Indian plantation workers, and their families spend a lower proportion of their income on education. Unlike the Chinese, few Indians have been successful in business. Says the Tamil finance director of a large plantation company: "Indians don't seem willing to take any risks to enter business."

Malaysian Indians have strong cultural affinities with India. The Tamil press is full of stories on M. Karunanidhi, MGR, Jayalalitha and celluloid stars like Kamalahasan and Amala. Yet most young Malaysian Indians have no desire to return to India. "I was born here and will always live here," says 26-year-old R. Ravindran, a driver in a transport firm.

Which is not to say that Indians

PARANJOY GUHA THAKURTA



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in Malaysia face no problems. "It's worse than in South Africa. Here the racism is more subtle," complains Chandran Bose, a bartender. Most Indians say it is extremely difficult for them to get admission to higher education courses because an informal 'quota' system is in operation. Laments a Malaysian Indian government official: "Even the few university seats reserved for Indians are filled up by persons from the entire subcontinent, including Sri Lankans and Bangladeshis who are considered 'Indians' while filling quotas."

There are close to 80,000 Indians in the Malaysian civil services and police force but most cannot aspire to senior positions; only one has a rank equivalent to that of secretary to the Indian Government. Once there were two Indians of the rank of major general in the Malaysian army; but now, the senior most position an Indian can hope to obtain is that of brigadier. Two years ago, an Indian, Tun Salleh Abas, became lord president (a position similar to that of chief justice of the Supreme Court in India), but he



Samy Vellu: Mr Ten Per Cent?

had to retire prematurely in order to make way for a Malay.

Not all Malaysian Indians suffer from a siege mentality. For instance, some of the leading television and radio commentators-persons like Harjit Singh Hullon, Sharma Shukla, Sukania Venugopal and Mary Ann Masilamoney—are Indians who speak the national language Bahasa Malaysia fluently.

To an extent Indians in Malays. have been their own worst enemia The caste divisions that plague th country have been imported almost lock, stock, and barrel to Malaysia There is a divide between north an south Indians, and between Tamb and other south Indians. Local India politicians too have played a role in aggravating caste differences. San Jomo Kwame Sundaram, associated EW professor of economics at the Univer sity of Malaysia: "When Tamil paro chialism is exhausted, the politician invoke Hindu sentiments and when that has been done with, they resort caste politics.'

Ruling party leaders like Sam Vellu and Pathmanaban, however argue that Malaysian Indians haven got a bad deal, that they can prosper they work harder and that their pro lems are no different from those face by minorities the world over.

Maybe, but Indians in Malaysi can certainly do with a bit more of the elusive quality: unity.

> -PARANJOY GUHA THAKUR in Kuala Lung

## Sex, Lies and Videotape

T'S a scandal the likes of which has never hit the staid Indian community in Malaysia. In the harsh spotlight is D.P. Vijandran, deputy speaker of Parliament and the secretary general of the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC). And the charge: that he sexually exploited female employees under him and videotaped his exploits.

When opposition MP Karpal Singh alleged last December in Parliament that Vijandran—protege and lieutenant of MIC President S. Samy Vellu-had acted in a number of pornographic films, there was an unprecedented uproar. The news hit the headlines and even made it to the Tamil press in India. Vijandran had to quit his official posts, though he remains an MP. Vijandran has filed two libel suits against Karpal Singh who told INDIA TODAY that nothing would come out of them.

The scandal has its origins in August 1988 when Vijandran's nephew together with three of his friends entered his home and stole a



Karpal Singh: blowing the lid

safe that had 11 videotapes and four envelopes containing photographs. It was claimed that the nephew's girl-friend-who later committed suicide—had been among the women seduced by Vijandran, a bachelor, and that this was the nephew's way of taking revenge. The safe was later dumped and the tapes removed. Vijandran registered a theft case but nothing was heard of it till Karpal Singh of the Democratic Action Party blew the lid on the case.

This January, it transpired that the police had arrested the four suspects in the theft case a year

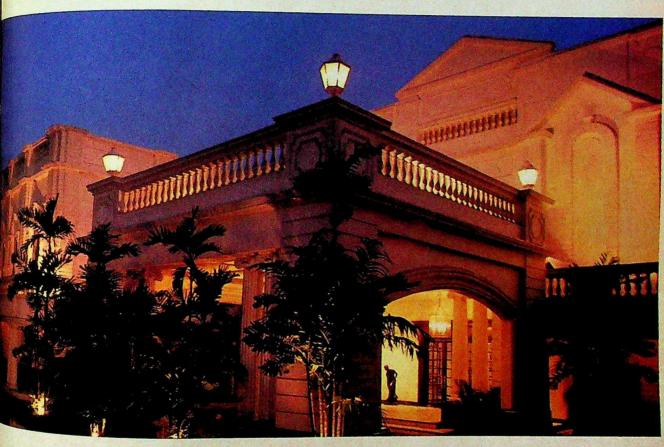
earlier, seized the tapes (which Vijandran admitted belonged to him) and then destroyed them on the orders of the attorney general who also ordered that the case be closed. When the police chief in the Criminal Investigation Department was asked by local journalists what he would do, he replied: "How can we proceed with the investigation without the tapes? If someone can provide the tapes we may be able to continue.'

So far, no one has. But colourful stories about the case continue todo the rounds of Kuala Lumpur. Ac cording to one, a group of Tamik discovered a Vijandran lookalike in Madras, and paid him to actin a port film. Now these videotapes are being sold as the real ones.

Most Indians are not surprised that the Government rallied to Vijandran's defence and tried hard to prevent facts from coming to light Says one: "You might feel outraged but we take such things for granted." But one unfortunate fall out here. out has been that the episode has been used to tarnish the entire lar dian community in Malaysia, par ticularly women. That is what rath kles more than anything else. —PARANJOY GUHA THAKURI

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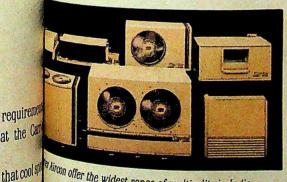
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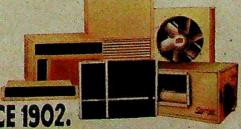
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# **Double Standards**

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N August 1989, Rajni Kothari wrote in his own journal Lokayan: "The fact of the matter is that large segments of this older generation of influential activists had fallen prey to the establishment's game of co-optation and for the false sense of importance and status that went with it (like membership of the Rajya Sabha or a chance to lecture to consultative committees of Parliament) or simply got hoodwinked by illusory ways of sustained struggle (Ela Bhatt, Parameswar Rao, Kishore Saint are a few examples). The result of this caving in by one-time leaders of important movements has been disastrous."

In December 1989, Rajni Kothari with unseemly haste willingly gets co-opted as member, Planning Commission and starts lecturing to consultative committees of Parliament. He made himself known to be a champion for the underdog and for stopping the Narmada dam from being constructed. Now as member looking after environment in the Planning Commission, apart from joining in a few symbolic protests, he observes a value-based silence over the Government's decision to go ahead with the Narmada dam. No question of resigning over any issue so trivial as this because now he is comfortably settled as an anti-establishment figure in the Government.

From 1984 to 1989, the Government for the first time went out of its way to woo village-based voluntary agencies. A policy statement was included in the seventh plan and Rs 150 crore allotted; administrative structures were established in various ministries to identify genuine groups at the village level and support them financially with the minimum of bottle-necks; procedures were simplified and many groups invited to sit in on government meetings to discuss anti-poverty programmes.

But a dialogue to come to a consensus on a common code of conduct to be followed by all rural voluntary agencies taking government funds revealed for the first time the more ugly face of the voluntary sector. They wanted neither financial discipline nor public accountability. They proceeded to stifle open debate, forced decisions against any common code and brought foreign donor agencies to twist the arms of those who defied the urban-based groups. These very people who survived on foreign patronage make policy for the Government today.

Only time will tell which is worse—government joining the voluntary sector (1984-89) or the voluntary sector joining government (1990). The Planning Commission today has full time members who were once self-styled spokesmen of the voluntary sector. They have joined a government that claims to believe in the right to information. But no debate on any major issue concerning poverty programmes or employment generation, which they shouted for when they were nobodies, seems to have been initiated.

The breed of so-called voluntary agencies more

visible in the corridors of Yojana Bhawan and other ministries are those who have lost hope in bringing fundamental change at the village level. They are scared of going to the front themselves. Agitating for action over a rape case, for minimum wages, or even to run a fair price shop properly and provide safe drinking water are, they believe, tasks meant for the jawans, not for the generals that they are. They justify their cowardice by saying their role is to change public opinion, activate networks, arrange meetings, hold training camps and organise funds.

By far the greatest damage these rootless activists are doing is to get genuine village groups and individuals to start looking down at their own country, and its systems, values, skills and knowledge that have stood the test of time. They do that in



a sinister fashion—by sending them abroad to attend workshops and conferences on poverty, environment, ecology, drinking water and human rights. Committed individuals from small village groups are sent for useless training programmes abroad and they come back suitably brainwashed full of western buzz words and alien theories.

For whatever lofty or sordid reasons the L.C Jains and Rajni Kotharis of the world have sold themselves to the Government, it is their moral duty to see that the voluntary sector does not suffer. A policy statement on rural voluntary agencies must come out in the Chapter on Rural Development in the eighth plan. A financial commitment of over Rs 150 crore earmarked in the seventh plan must be made in the eighth plan. The Krishnaswami Committee report on simplifying procedures must be accepted and followed by all departments supporting the voluntary sector. The rural voluntary agencies, state and Central governments must begin discussions on these issues. But maybe it would be too much to ask these hypocrites in government to come to a consensus on a common code of conduct for voluntary agencies.

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# Homage to Patel



BY any reckoning Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is one of the three greatest Indian political leaders of the 20th century. Born October 31, 1875, died

December 15, 1950. He was six years younger than Gandhiji and 14 years older than Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. He was a practical man with a superb

political temperament. instrument the Just Gandhiji needed to take care of the Congress party machine. He had, what called. Romans gravitas. Neither before 1947 nor after, no one fooled around with him.

While the lives of and Pandit Gandhiji Nehru are fully documented, the same cannot be said about Sardar Patel. In 1953 appeared Narahari Parikh's twovolume biography of the Sardar-Gandhiji's prefix that suited Patel so well. In 1964 the Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan published

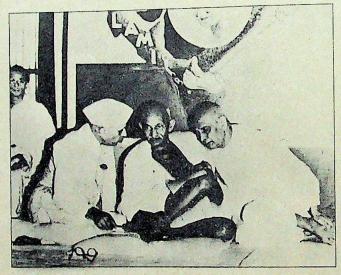
K.L. Panjabi's The Indomitable Sardar. In 1970 Allen and Unwin of London brought out D.V. Thamankar's Sardar Patel with a foreword by Lord Mountbatten. Then we have 10 volumes of Sardar Patel's correspondence 1945-1950. between ably edited by the late

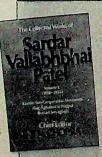
Durga Das. Sardar Patel's centenary in 1975 produced no work of consequence on him. This is a pity. His is a great life and needs an S. Gopal or an M.J. Akbar to write a worthwhile biography, warts and all.

Forty years after his death it has been decided to bring out his collected works. The advisory board is headed by S. Nijalingappa and includes Chaudhary Devi Lal. The chief editor is Dr P.N. Chopra, one time editor of The Indian Gazeteers. Volume I. recently released, covers the period 1918-1925. Nijalingappa's foreword offers no fresh insight into Patel's life. The second

sentence made me sit up: "His strength, his imagination, his determination, his sagacity and more than his patriotism and his appreciation of the necessity that India should be one, united, integrated whole in order that as one nation it may grow in stature from strength to strength from poverty

> Nehru, Gandhi and Patel: historic friendship





While the lives of Gandhiji and Nehru are fully documented, the same cannot be said about Patel, one of the three greatest Indian political leaders of this century.

to affluence, in one word a strong nation, which would stand in the front rank of nations and lead them."

I have tried hard to fathom what Nijalingappa wants to convey. There are less convoluted and more grammatical ways of saying it.

Chopra's 25-page introduction is informative but shows signs of literary exhaustion and poor proof-reading. E.M. Forster said somewhere that inattention to detail is the besetting Indian sin. Alas! he was right. On page 10 Chopra writes: "The son of a sturdy kisan Vallabhbhai had...." Then on page 12 he writes: "But Vallabhbhai

knew that he belonged to a middle class family...." Then again on page 14 w are informed that: "As a peasant Vallabhbhai was eager to go to village around London and acquire firsthan knowledge...." We all have our limita tions and shortcomings, but this is ab much. Then on page 26: "Sir Les Wilson, Governor of Bombay, in h letter of 21st July 1925, to Lord Lytton the Viceroy .... 'Heavens above, the

Viceroy in 1925 was log Reading and not los Lytton.

All major publishing undertakings have tee ing troubles. I am condent that Chopra and his team will in the yearst come do justice to their portant work they have undertaken. There is lot of valuable materiali the first volume on the Kheda Non-Cooperation Movement, the Flag Ag itation in Nagpur a the Borsad Satyagrahawhere Patel provided in spiring leadership. Fre more valuable and mo ing are accounts of Pate personal life, the death his young wife, the plice of his son Dayabhai daughter Maniben.

The early pages of the book lift a curtain or n on Patel's coming un the spell of Gandhiji alfa short period of playing England-returned ba ter. But once he joined Mahatma there was

What a great idea

looking back. Patel gave Gandhi total and unflinching loyalis Patel's stay in London between 1912, there are only a few state letters. He passed his Bar Examin standing first, and left for home away to look after his impored family. He was then 37. During very period Jawaharlal Nehruwa doing his Bar at Law in London obviously the two never met the

In all, 10 volumes will be bo out. Volume II will take the Patel from 1926 to 1930—the years Vallabhbhai Patel and his Vithalbhai attained national



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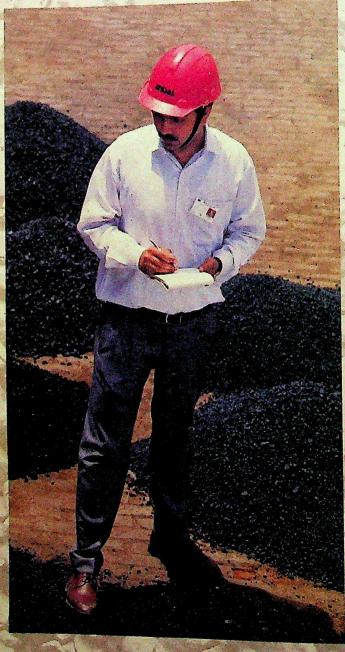
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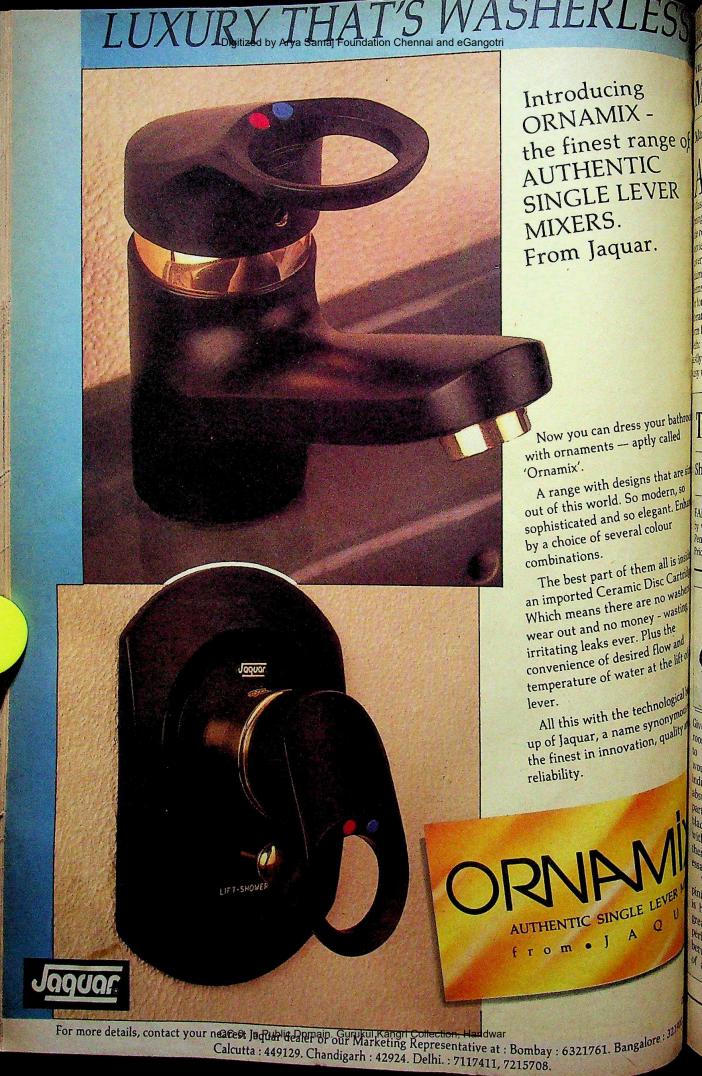
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fafunction in Pune to mark the release of his collection of short stories. Fair Tree of the Void, Sarang admitted he preferred gon the periphery. But judging by raction he has evoked—long insws in Sunday papers, extensive grage on arts pages, critical acand snapped up copies—it she won't be able to remain there ing. The enfant terrible of Marathi ature has arrived in an accessible of English readers. Says Vikram "He's very good. Generally I'm bored, but even though I was with my own work, Sarang held

me and pulled me along from story to story."

True, every story of Sarang's has appeared earlier, but typically they were in obscure literary journals in Europe and America, and except for a story in Penguin Books' New Writing in India and a few in other magazines. Sarang was for long an author cogno-

scenti would mention in whispers.

The rest only knew of him as a talented professor, passed over for the chair in contemporary literature at the University of Bombay but now heading the department of English, responsible for adding Rolland Barthes and Eliot's essays to the syllabus.

All of his writing,

however, has first been in Marathi. Says he: "I feel more comfortable and adventurous in Marathi, in a way, I'd be diffident in English. I have a greater sense of rhythm in English. But it is easier in Marathi because I don't have to write of a reality which isn't based in the language."

Sarang lives in a small, ground



#### Sarang: challenging traditions

neither venerable nor wise. One woman emerges as a cantankerous hag, another professor participates in a macabre ritual over a former student, besides enjoying examining the colour of his own stools. Not surprisingly, one editor of a Marathi journal lost his job after he published a controversial story written by Sarang in the face of public opprobrium.

Yet, despite the strong undercurrent of nihilism, Sarang has not discarded politics. Three of his stories are highly political, where his iconoclasm converts India into a tinpot dictatorship (although Sarang says the stories were written after his claustrophobic experience of having taughtin Basrain Iraq, where he had to get a licence to own even a typewriter). Return, in fact, with its labyrinthine bureaucracy and its faceless interrogators is reminiscent of Kafka's Trial.

Sarang's world-view is intensely personal and subjective. But his stories are a welcome addition to the pantheon of English translations of Indian writing, reaching a wider, national audience, adding further diversity and vibrancy to the emerging Indian Modernism.

-SALIL TRIPATHI

## **The Outsiders**

Shades of Kafka, Camus

FAIR TREE OF THE VOID VILAS SARANG Penguin India Price: Rs 55; Pages: 187



SAMUEL Beckett required two men on a country road to create the stark symbol of 20th century absurdity in Waiting for Godot. Vilas Sarang more economical.

Givehim a man and a bare, cheerless on. And instead of adding objects o complete the picture, Sarang hould find in the still life sufficient ducement to create plausible yet dound tales which are part-dream. Part-reality, with a wry undertone of back humour. Yet Sarang writes httprecision—all that's essential is here, and everything that isn't nectsary is sliced out.

The lonely man in the room is not thing for a phone call or a letter. He happy swatting flies and takes great relish in recounting those experiodes in recounting those between or he tortures an insect between the hour and minute hands a clock, in the process losing

all possible relationship with time.

If the man does receive letters, they're usually in

a series, signed by different names, but possibly from the same person. Then, again, they may not be. The letters, in fact, may never have been written. But it doesn't matter one way or the other.

In fact, nothing is certain in these stories, translated from the Marathi. Each tale could be the product of strange dreams, the kind that scare American sophomores to go running to their analysts. Sarang is a graduate of the school of Kafka and Camus, but despite that occidental influence, he is firmly rooted in the Indian milieu.

Sarang constantly provokes the safe cocoons of middle class morality, by metamorphosing one man into an erect phallus and deluding him into believing that he is Shiva's lingam; or creating a universe of women who possess either torsoes or legs at an island called Lorzan; or unleashing a revolt of thousands of Ganpati idols who suddenly leave their processions and floats to disappear into the back alleys of Bombay city; or being irreverential towards a funeral pyre, even while the protagonist's girl-friend is sitting out in the cold and dark across the cemetery wall, a bit like Camus's Outsider.

Sarang challenges another tradition: the old people in his stories are

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floor flat in central Bombay, and is casual about his appearance. He has often been photographed wearing a beret or a golf hat. And despite the room's middle class appearance, his writing is completely removed from it. Says he: "Indian writing is so heavily bound by middle class values that one has to break away from that.'

Though he is most familiar with Marathi literature, Sarang distances himself from what he calls the "wishywashy humanism" and mawkishness represented by the Marathi writers who're reigning deities on bookshelves. "There are many who seem modern, but if you scratch the surface a little, romantic middle class values emerge," he contends.

Such views have not endeared him, and Sarang has understandably been a bit of a recluse, not unlike poet Arun Kolatkar who Sarang rates along with himself and poet Dilip Chitre as the only three really modern writers in

Two years ago, at the World Poetry Festival in Bhopal, Kolatkar preferred to read poems rather than answer questions from Hindi professors who were keen to know why he used abusive, bazaar language in his poetry. At the Pune function, Sarang spoilt hisand his detractors'-lunch by terming one writer "trash". Says he: "I've usually been protected by being published in magazines which sell only a few hundred copies."

Consequently, past criticism of Sarang's work has dwelt on his alienness. Despite its Kafkaesque imagery, his stories are as local as the yellow and brown trains of Western Railways. Says poet and painter, Gieve Patel: "He has a strong local bias which is not borrowed and which anchors his writing to this country. His observation is keen; it has a personal edge to it.'

Some critics have even termed him a cynic. But poet Adil Jussawala, in the foreword to his collection, disagrees: "Neither cynicism nor nihilism informs Sarang's attitude to the human condition, but profound compassion."

Sarang fears that the feeling of modernism and cosmopolitan mentality are declining. Says he: "We are going back to our own restricted cultures." He now wants to write a novel, in which he hopes to take the kind of risks he has taken with his short stories. His only novel, Enkichya Raja, was very successful, but followed the conventional narrative mode. That's a road he wouldn't take again for sure. -SALIL TRIPATHI

**Female Voyage** 

Interesting, but superficial

MAY YOU BE THE MOTHER OF A HUNDRED SONS A Journey Among the Women of India by ELISABETH BUMILLER Random House Price: Rs 350; Pages: 300

vlav Ibu Be the Mother of a Hundred Sons

INDIA hits some like a "wet diaper": most foreigners seldom get beyond their nostrils on their first passage to India. Elisabeth Bumiller stepped off the plane to smells

"smoky and sweet and overripe and utterly foreign". Cow dung fires were behind the mystery, she later discovered. But the land soon got under her skin, especially after she set off on the discovery of the Indian woman. In essence, the discovery of India. In essence, the discovery of herself.

India has often been used as a pond in which both expatriates on a back-tothe-roots trip and footloose occidentals seek their own reflections. The latter, inversely: they come out patting themselves for being the fairest of them all. Most, however, remain in the shallow end. And Bumiller's no exception, judging by all the Beautiful People—a veritable who's who of New Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras-in her long list of acknowledgements.

But the author who spent nearly four years of the Rajiv Rajin New Delhi writing for The Washington Post intermittently left the comfortable shores of those charmed drawing-rooms and plunged-nose clip off-into the country's murky depths: female infanticide in the interiors of Tamil Nadu, "selective abortion among the rich of Bombay", sati in Deorala, burning brides in New Delhi.

For comic relief, she courses through the world of "Rekha, Dimple, Sri Devi and Friends". One of those friends, Amitabh Bachchan, replies: "Why only Rekha ... why not the rest of them?" in answer to a question about his involvement with the siren.

Bumiller has been impartial in her use of both INDIA TODAY and the likes of Stardust and Femina as mirrors to the Indian woman. Zooming in on dais (midwives) with dirty finger nails,

Muthy ("the woman who put | second daughter to sleep"). Sh Bano, Kiran Bedi, Aparna Sen, Dutta, Neelam and Vijayalaksh Pandit, the canvas is limitless. The co fireside chats even coax Arun a Manju Bharat Ram to talk about the courtship and marriage: love had follow marriage. Bumiller is surpris by the lack of intimacy in couples. the land of the Kamasutra and legends of Krishna and Radha.

Although Bumiller sometim sounds like a latter-day reincarnation of a 19th century English burramer sahib and the book a bit trite a sort primer for the foreigner, put toget from diary jottings-she actually shed her memsahib accoutrements live with villagers in Khajuron Rajiv's constituency, for seven weeks. Gradually shedding many



Bumiller: stopover story

her preconceived notions, "...slot realized that the way Indian W live is the way the majority of in the world spend their lives; I Americans who are peculiar

The prose might not be esquein the areas of darkness. N it have the pungent incisive Jhabvala's Indiana. But Bumille the ordinary, the routine and near the universal. "Ultimately ized my journey to India was lege. Rather than going to the ery, I had come to the center.

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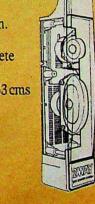
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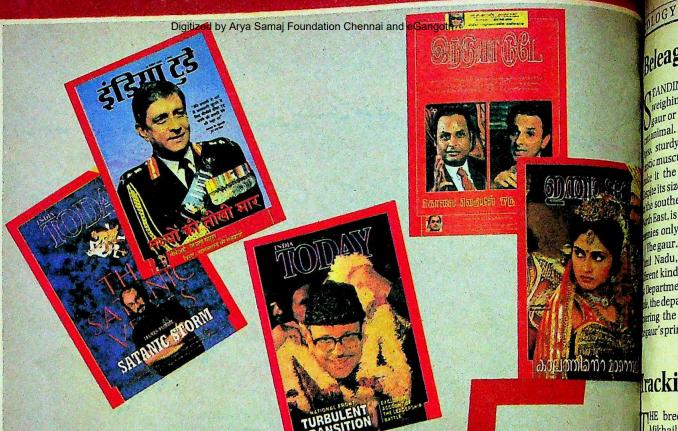
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# Releaguered Gaur

MANDING well above 6 ft and reighing close to a tonne, the gaur or Indian bison is a magnifimimal. Its massive head, chunky sturdy limbs and the characomuscular ridge on its shoulders the embodiment of vigour. de its size, the gaur, found mainly e southern hill tracts and in the Bast, is a timid animal. It charges nies only when threatened.

the gaur, in the Palni hill ranges in Nadu, however, now faces a rent kind of threat—from the Forpeartment itself. In the past dethe department has been steadily ging the upper Palni grasslands, gaur's prime grazing grounds, with



Gaurs: edge of extinction

eucalyptus plantations. While they are commercially profitable, eucalyptus trees are known to deplete water tables and destroy the grasslands. According to a study done by wildlife researcher Nina Sengupta recently. the grass growing in these areas has shrunk to a 10th of its original density.

As the plantations grow, the Palni hills gaur population is expected to drop substantially. That's because the gaur's food is chiefly grass. They do browse on leaves and eat the bark of certain trees but not eucalyptus.

To prevent the gaur population from dropping, the Palni Hills Conservation Council has called for a ban on commercial forestry. It has proposed that an area of 250 square kms in the region be earmarked as a national park. So far, nobody is listening.

#### **Macking Cranes**

THE breeze of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost is being felt by ecologists as well. Its rest beneficiary: the Siberian me. For more than two decades now thologists have been worried by dramatic decline of these majestic shat winter in Bharatpur, Raja-In Their numbers have fallen from 150 in the '60s to barely 17 last Reasons ranged from the war Ushanistan to poaching in Paki-But no one was sure.

the method of finding out was transmitters on the birds and thing their 3,000 km flight path the Ob river in Siberia to <sup>laratpur</sup> by satellite. In the past, the

Soviets had stodgily turned down requests for such studies. But recently Gorbachev gave the nod for an Indo-Soviet jointventure for tracking these cranes. Once the project gets underway, ornithologists for the first time would be able to chalk out the crane's long journey every winter from Siberia. That would reveal the cause of the decline.

To gain some experience in tracking, the Bombay Natural History Society, which is involved in the project, has approached the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for help. The society plans to start with ringing the common crane that also



Siberian cranes: under scrutiny

winters in India before starting work on the Siberian crane. For ISRO, which consented last fortnight, it would be a welcome diversion.

# assing the Buck

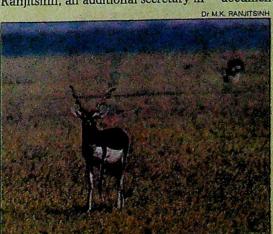
ltever participated in the Olympics would sweep the track and field rents. It would do the 100-metre lust four seconds leaving Carl sarbehind. And clear the current bpic high jump record of 2.38 vis with over a metre to spare.

Yet no wild animal has suffered so the a decline in numbers as the to blackbuck. At one time found Righout the country, the black Id is now among the most isolated in the contihi lust after Independence, in the Pashtra peninsula alone there

Blackbucks: drastic decline

were over 85,000 of them. Today, the entire country has around 40,000.

The Indian Blackbuck by Dr M.K. Ranjitsinh, an additional secretary in



the Environment Ministry, released recently, brings the buck's problem into sharp focus. It is an extensive documentation of the antelope's herd

behaviour, mating habits and breeding. Among the nuggets: with a higher female population, several males do keep harems. Secretions from glands and excreta are used to demarcate territories. And loss of its habitat has been a major cause of its decline. Ranjitsinh does outline a few solutions in reversing the trend. His own ministry must get cracking on them.

-RAJ CHENGAPPA

Tiwari: back in focus

However sophisticated the camera, being in front of it always beats bebehind it. Model Malavika Tiwari, 25, who had always disdained films, preferring photography instead, is now preparing for her debut in a film directed

by Tinnu Anand. Tiwari, who gained fame as the 'Tips and Toes' and 'Frooti' girl, does not promise an Oscar-winning performance. She is

all the same excited but nervous about her role in the film. "Judge me by my performance," says she. And if the verdict is unfavourable, she can always put her eye to the shutter once again.

 Like father like son, all the way. Whether it's politics or acting. If it was the silver screen for Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi. it's the small one for his son M.K. Stalin. The 37-year-old is for the first time playing the lead role in a 13 part TV serial called Kurinji Malar, expected to go on the air from September 1. Says Stalin: "Films are no longer a medium to reach people. While Tvisright at everyone's door. I'm not particular about the money it'll bring, but it will help me politically." Obvi-

Stalin: in the act



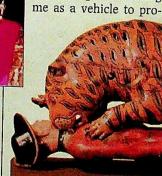


ously, no amount of grease paint can alter a politician's bottomline.



Banerjee: new avatar

 One can easily call it epic tennis. First Ramanand Sagar served up the Ramayana, then B.R. Chopra vol-



bharata. Now the ball's back

in Sagar's court. His answer

video

the

Sarvdaman

Krishna, a new epic for

will play Krishna. His

credentials: acted in Adi

Shankaracharya. Says he:

"The role's been played

by so many people there

are bound to be compari-

sons." He claims he ac-

cepted the role for he

thought "god was using

circuit.

Banerjee

mote his message". But with the air thick with epics, the signals are getting blurred.

 At the age of four he mastered calculus. At 12, he threw out video games in favour of algorithms. And now at 17, he is a third year medical student at New York University, well on his way to becoming the youngest doctor in the world. Nor does he have any intentions of slowing down. In fact, Balamurati Krishna Ambati is positively impatient with teachers and counsellors



Bala: medico prodigy

who advise him to ease the pace. Says Bala, who move to the US from Tamil Nac when he was three: "Admi istrators and bureaucra equal inertia." Whiz-k laws for the laymen.

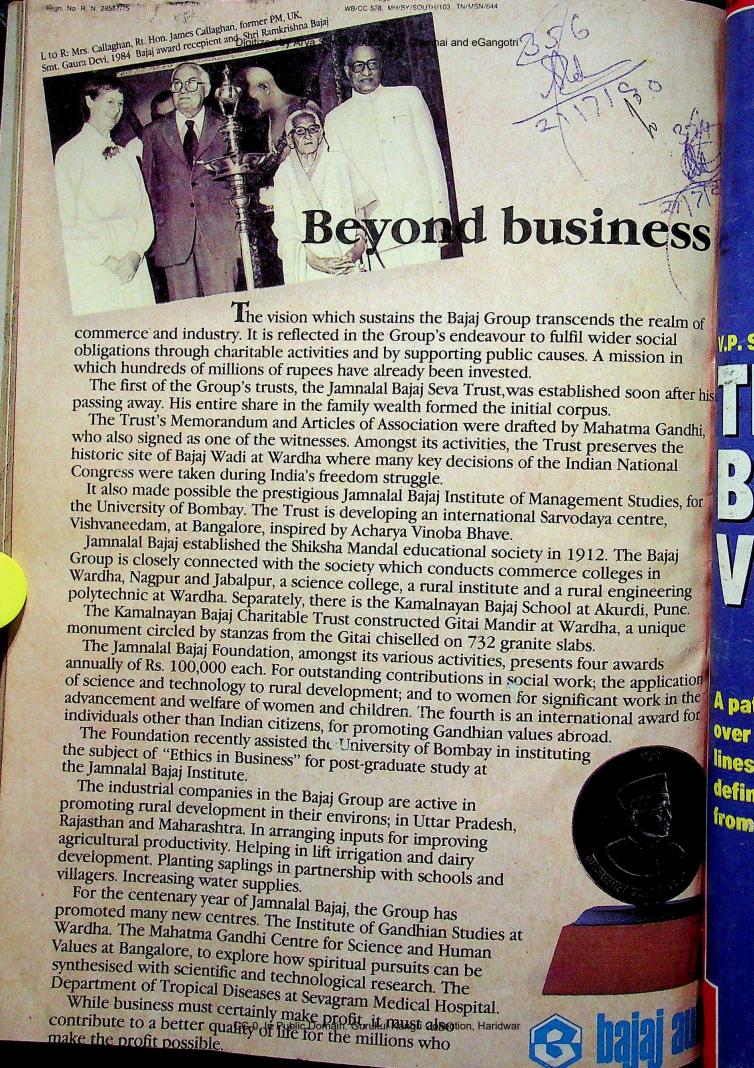
 While Tipu Sulta courts controversy on the idiot box, his tiger at t Victoria and Albert Musel in London has emitteditsle roar. The mechanical exhib



Tipu's tiger: last roar

of a roaring tiger mauling threshing European ping underneath, was made Tipu under French direction He used to say: "Better live day as a tiger, than a lifeting as a sheep." The English tured it at Seringapatnal and the prized display la inspired Keats' poem The and Bells. Now the museum has ruled it too fragile function. But after a year innings, mostly in limelight, Tipu's Tiger little cause for complaint





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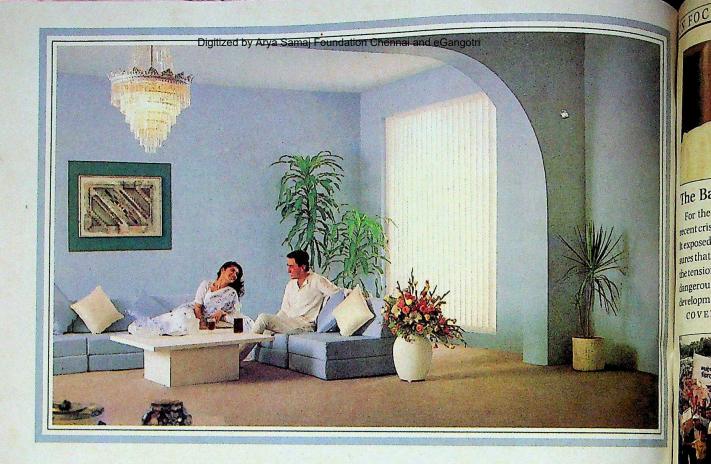
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# fter his Battered Victor

A patchwork solution tides over the crisis. But battle lines are more clearly defined and the threat from within simmers.

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#### The Battered Victor

For the Janata Dal, and V.P. Singh, the ment crisis has been a most damaging one. hexposed the contradictory pulls and pressures that enfeeble the party. An analysis of hetensions that cleave the party, making it dangerously vulnerable. Also, the dramatic developments recaptured in detail.

COVER STORY .....



#### A Stormy Calm

The Nepalese are savouring the winds of freedom, but not without trepidation. For emocracy has brought disruptive pulls with it. The law and order situation is bad, pices are rising, and the Nepali Congress and the United Left Front are falling apart. Stormy days seem to lie ahead.

SPECIAL FEATURE......83



#### Lives on the Line

On the line of control in Kashmir, a desperate battle of wits is being waged between Indian defence forces and Pakistan-inspired militant infiltrators. Improved intelligence and morale have resulted in the capture of many intruders and the seizure of arms. An on-the-spot report.

SPECIAL REPORT......72



#### Readymade Road to Success

A new revolution is sweeping men's wear, with ready-to-wear garments becoming available in an exciting array of designs and ranges, to suit all pockets. Top textile mills and a clutch of upmarket boutiques are vying with each other to grab a share of the rapidly growing market.

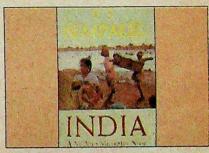
BUSINESS SPECIAL ......90



#### Earning a Reprieve

After being on the firing line for years, Aiitabh Bachchan won his first victory when a Swedish newspaper, Dagens Nyheter, apologised for naming Bachchan as the man behind the sixth Swiss account into which the Bofors pay-offs had been made. Ajitabh also received damages.

GLOBE-TROTTING......78



#### A Million Mutinies Now

V.S. Naipaul, regarded as one of the finest living writers, has long had a love-hate relationship with India, his ancestral land. His third, and perhaps most important, book on India is soon to be released in the UK. INDIA TODAY presents exclusive extracts from A Million Mutinies Now.

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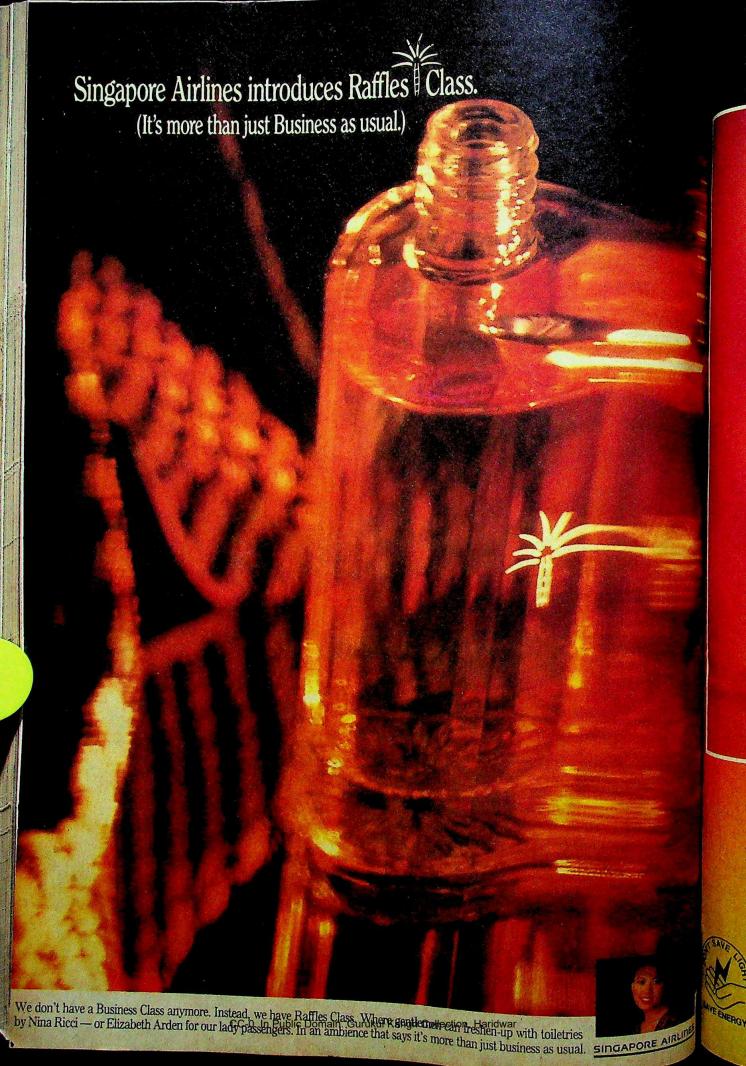
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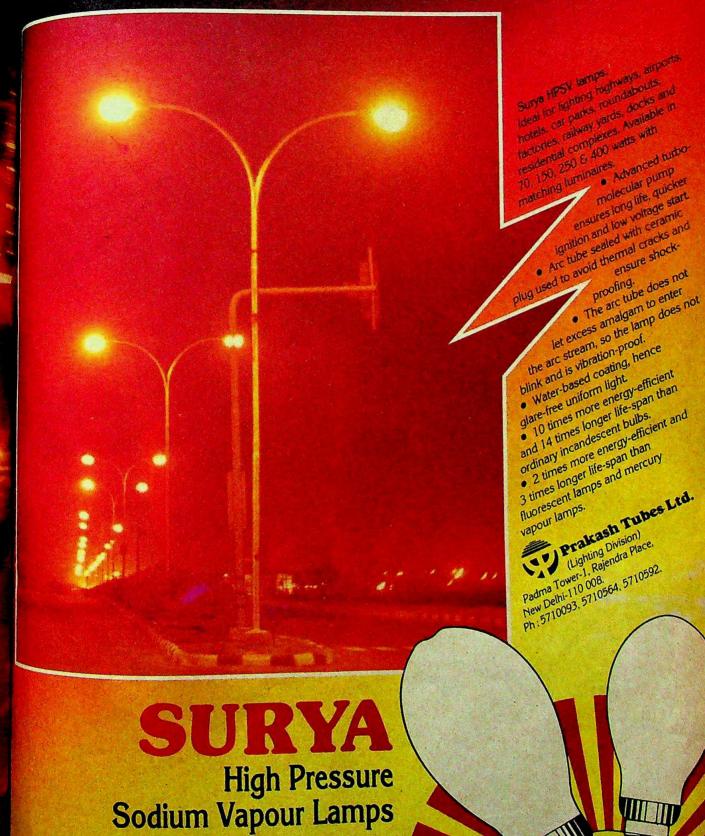
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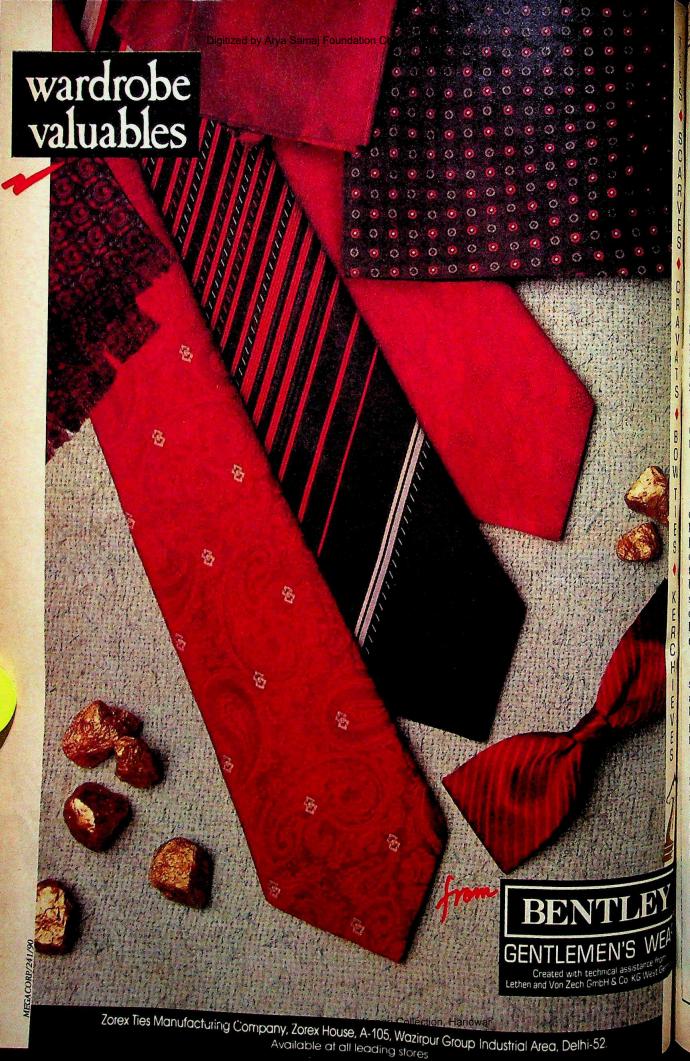
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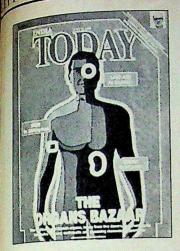
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#### ORGANS FOR SALE

Ihave had my kidney transplanted but have not been a victim of any dirty game ("The Organs Bazaar", July 31). DrKirpalani is right when he says that he cannot turn away patients.

Siliguri

R.K. GULATI

■ As long as a life is saved there is nothing immoral in giving an organ. RAAJ GOPAL MEHROTRA Kanpur

#### TROUBLED ISLE

It is now clear that the LTTE's earlier decision to negotiate with the Sri Lankan Government ("Tigers' Last Stand", July 15) was only a ploy to get the IPKF out of the island. India has done well not to involve itself in the current fighting between the two sides. However it should ensure that President Premadasa's actions do not lead to a Cypruslike solution of the ethnic crisis. Chandigarh AMARDEEP RAI

The present scenario in Sri Lanka shows that the IPKF had actually operated there with its right arm tied behind its back. Despite this self-im-Posed handicap it did an excellent job. Faizabad HERAMB KUMAR

Pirabhakaran and his LTTE are a bunch of cold-blooded murderers and should be wiped out by the Sri Lankan Army. However, India should mainlain a neutral stance as its intervention is unwarranted now or in the future. Bangalore E.B. SUBRAMANIAM

I would like to congratulate the Previous Indian governments of Indira

Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi for nursing the cubs and making them "fascist, racist, bloodthirsty Tigers".

Colombo

G.S.A. DE SILVA

■ It is ironical that while India is accusing Pakistan of supporting anti-India forces, it is supporting anti-Sri Lanka forces. The Tigers are doing exactly what the terrorists are doing in Punjab and Kashmir.

Hyderabad

PRAMOD VALSANGKAR

A few more incidents like the massacre of EPRLF members will turn Tamil Nadu into another Punjab or Kashmir. The Karunanidhi Government should crack down on LTTE activities in the state.

Chandigarh

DHIRAI CHHIBH

#### **CONGRESS MISRULE**

All the agitations that we are confronted with today can be linked to the misrule of the Congress Party ("Stoking Separatism", July 15). Those who lead these agitations should give sufficient time to the National Front Government to find viable solutions.

Indore

PRABHAKAR S. HARSOLE

■ To resolve problems like Punjab and Kashmir, the Government must pay attention to Centre-state relations. Also, it should effectively check infiltration of men and material from across the Pakistan border and firmly deal with the militants.

Bombay

R.N. VASWANI

#### TILTING THE SCALES

The unsavoury happenings in the Bombay High Court ("Crisis of Credibility", July 15) shows that even judges have feet of clay. 'Contempt of court' should be dismissed with the contempt it deserves as the principle lacks a proper perspective.

**Bombay** 

N.G. WAGLE

Political appointments stifle the independent functioning of the judiciary, as these appointees are obliged to their political masters.

Hyderabad

V. RAVICHANDRAN

■ It is unfortunate that when the executive was manipulating the judi-

ciary to suit its own ends, the masses of this country maintained a discreet silence and never raised questions.

Bombay

K.A. ANANTHRAM

■ There was a time when the judiciary was considered to be sacrosanct and even Parliament did not dare to enter its domain. Now, the press freely criticises its functioning. This certainly is a change for the worse and does not augur well for the country.

Chandigarh

MANGU RAM GUPTA

■ Your article fails to highlight the cause of corruption in the judiciary. By the time a lawyer is approached for a judgeship, he is at the zenith of his career charging about Rs 25,000 for a single appearance in court. As a judge, his salary drops to Rs 10,000 a month. Wouldn't that tempt the very best? VIJAY D. SAMPAT Bombay

#### STRANGE APATHY

When even Indian-born foreign nationals are worried about developments in Kashmir, the apathetic stance of Farooq Abdullah ("Curious Moves". July 15) seems strange. Are his "other interests" more important than solving his state's problems?

Vellore

ANUPAM ANAND

#### LEFT BEHIND

If so much violence and boothcapturing can occur in a municipal corporation election ("Tainted Win", July 15), what will happen in the next Vidhan Sabha elections?

Calcutta

SUDEEP CHOUDHURY

■ The violence indulged in by the Marxists is a clear sign that they are on the defensive.

Trichy

L. ROHINI

#### A HOUSE DIVIDED

It is ironical that while Rajiv Gandhi is trying to revitalise the Congress(I) ("Comeback Chaos", July 15), many of his partymen are floating forums within the party to embarrass him.

Dehradun

RAHUL SHARMA

Rajiv Gandhi's 'Bharat Yatra' will be successful due to the failure of the

OUME XV NUMBER 15: FOR THE FORTNIGHT AUGUST 1-15, 1990

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GROULATION, INDIA LIMITED. POST BOX 706. FARIDABAD-121007. HARYANA ● TRADE

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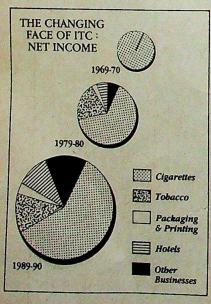
# New horizons, new hopes.



Shri J.N. Sapru

#### THE CHANGING FACE OF ITC

Right till the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies, ITC was merely a cigarette company. It was during the seventies which also coincided with the 'Indianisation' of the Company, that the profile of the Company started to change. Your Company entered the businesses of hotels (1974), acquired the Indian Leaf Tobacco Development Company (1975), promoted Bhadrachalam Paperboards Ltd. (1976), and made exports and foreign exchange earnings a part of its business strategy.



This decade, therefore, witnessed both the excitement and birth pangs of creating new businesses. It meant making mistakes and rectifying them. Most of all it meant listening, unlearning and then learning.

The eighties have therefore seen your Company consolidate its businesses started in the seventies first—and then branch out into new businesses with confidence and from a position of strength.

Hence a longer term analysis of your Company's performance is a better measure of your Organisation's health. The gross income of your Company in 1969-70 was a mere Rs. 145 crores. At the end of the next decade in 1979-80, it increased to Rs. 458 crores and 1989-90 saw it grow to Rs. 1827 crores. During the same period, net income increased from Rs. 65 crores in 1969-70 to Rs. 140 crores in 1979-80 and to Rs. 677 crores in 1989-90. The post-tax profits during the same benchmark periods increased from Rs. 3 crores to Rs. 6 crores to Rs. 53 crores in 1989-90. What is, however, even more significant is that today over a third of your Company's net income comes from activities other than cigarettes. Your Company has been transformed from a single-product Company twenty years ago to a multi-product, multi-business enterprise serving the national good in sectors crucial to development and growth.

#### PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

It has been a good year with a strong allround performance by all divisions. After a 1:1 Bonus declared last year, your Company has recorded a post-tax profit of Rs. 52.62 crores, which is an increase of over 35% on an annualised basis, and has enabled your Directors to recommend a 37.5% Dividend on the enlarged equity after retaining over 50% for future growth and expansion.

Gross income at Rs. 1827 crores and net income at Rs. 677 crores scaled new heights, recording a 28% and 33% increase respectively over the previous year on an annualised basis.

Foreign exchange earnings at Rs. 146 crores are nearly Rs. 90 crores more than last year and represent a 95% increase on an annualised basis. They also represent 22% of your Company's net income and cover foreign exchange outgoings nearly eight times. To this if you were to add the Rs. 1188 crores paid by your Company by way of duties and taxes during the year, you will perhaps appreciate the full extent of your Company's contribution to the national exchequer. It makes you Company the largest single contributor to the nation in the private sector.

It is heartening to report the progress made by your Company's newest venture in the progress and additional to the progress the field of agri-businesses and edible oils In a short span of less than two year of Direct your Company's edible oil brands superem SUNDROP, CRYSTAL and SUDHAM pelhi, have become household name see Delhi, throughout the country and we have not only become market leaders in would list with in other varieties of cooking of thowingly as well. At the same time, your Con room of yo pany's ADARSH brand seeds have appended in the control of the pany's ADARSH brand seeds have appended in the control of the received an overwhelming acceptant ruled issue from the farmers in Andhra Pradesha copriate a trusted high-germinating seed.

#### **PUNJAB ANAND BATTERIES** LIMITED (PABL)

After receiving your and the Government of India's approval, under the BIFR package your Company made the necess investment of Rs. 119 lakhs to participale 50% equity holder in the revival of the company, located as you know, in trouble-torn state of Punjab. After consider rable hard work and persuasion by Ju Company, Toshiba of Japan have agreed take an equity stake in PABL, subject to 60 approvals, and sign a Technical Assistant Agreement, assuring long term association the onerous responsibility of reviving 1 sio ans.

With the finalisation of this agreemental the modernisation of production facilities trial production of button cells and to marketing of all-purpose dry cells be commenced, and the quality is reported. be highly satisfactory.

It is, however, unfortunate that assistant promised by the the Central and & Governments and banks, under the package, still remains to be made available. This does raise a fundamental issue whether we are serious about the remova sickness, whether the present system adequate and whether revival of sickness, be achieved be achieved without all parties playing designated roles without loss of proting the time. I hope the Government will go matter their most serious attention, en productive utilisation of locked in resultand and protecting many possible jobs in process.

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### epts from the speech of Shri J.N. Sapru, Chairman, Limited, at the 79th Annual General Meeting 100 6.7.1990.

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leaders in would like to reiterate that your e to reckon many has not ever evaded excise duties, cooking of 100 mingly transgressed the law. In the , your Con ron of your Directors, your Company seeds have mos no further liabilities in respect of the acceptant ruled issues and will continue to take all a Pradesha ropriate steps for their early and sadory resolution.

#### **NTURE PROSPECTS**

Tha good monsoon in sight, the prospfor your Company can be considered Government particularly with our major thrust particularly with our major thrust particularly with our major thrust

#### participate and of the sale (CONOMIC GROWTH: mow, in & IBLUEPRINT

sion by you During the past few years, we have been ave agreed ang and reading a lot about the advent of ubject 1060 21st century and how India should cal Assistant Freach it—so that at least by the turn of the association stury we can hold our own in the comity of

lowever, the most inelastic of all our Sources - Time - seems to get greene are is getting spent on debating our artificially created and beautifully ated dichotomies than on getting to implementing whatever we planned effectively and effici-The crying need today is not who the public sector or the the public sector the marty houses or the the medium-sector or the all, tiny and cottage-sector — but iny and cottage-sector dodoes it well, cost effectively, and in Let us for a change close this to the thicient sector as opposed to the

After forty-three years of Independence, we still have nearly half our population living near or below the poverty line. We have seen what the centralised planning of the communist world has achieved. It has succeeded in sending man into outer space but has not been able to provide the mere fundamentals of livelihood — the *Roti*, *Kapda aur Makaan* — to its people. There are lessons to be drawn from the crumbling of the Berlin Wall and the upsurge of the people in Eastern Europe and the USSR, and in their basic demand for economic performance and political freedom.

The reality is that there are two Indias: one that is industrial, modern and progressive and largely urban, and the other which is agricultural, poor and somewhat primitive and largely rural. Both these disparate socioeconomic sectors have to simultaneously develop. Neglect of one at the cost of the other has its own pitfalls. But what is good for the goose is not necessarily good for the gander. Therefore, two different plans, strategies and courses of action have to be simultaneously evolved and implemented, one to revitalise the weaker and impoverished India, and the other to enable India to hold its own globally. Modern industrial India will have to be capital intensive, technology driven, capable of producing quality goods at competitive costs, and not labour intensive if we are to be global players. The solution to our employment problem must be found through the rapid development of our agricultural, forestry and plantations, infrastructure and service sectors where both technology and vast manpower can be gainfully employed.

#### ITC's STRATEGIES FOR THE **NINETIES**

It is against this background, that your Company, with its avowed thrust on exports during the decade of the nineties, is setting its strategies and prioritising issues. Our International Business Division is being established for this purpose and your Company intends to be in the forefront of the internationalisation of India.



To this end, we have set up offices in New York, London and Singapore as bases for international trading to assist our export efforts. We plan to establish more representative centres in strategic international locations. These offices mark the start of our direction for the nineties - that of becoming an Indian International in form and in spirit by developing pride in the label 'Made in India'. This label should compete with the best in terms of international parameters so that, as in all our other areas of diversification, we attain our own corporate goals through serving national priorities.

Finally, in talking about local issues and trends, we must recognise that the human element will, and must, take precedence over all other considerations. Therefore, even the most sophisticated technology cannot find acceptance if it does not translate into meeting human skills and aspirations. Your Company will always re-skill and re-contemporise its people so that obsolescene does not happen, and so that the human resource fulfils its role as a multiplier and synergiser of all other resources. I have mentioned that the nineties will make increasing demands on corporations to be innovative and market oriented. ITC is playing, and will continue to play, a leading role here through all its divisions. We are targetting new horizons and have new hopes not only for your Company but for our country as a whole.

This does not purport to be a report of the proceedings of the 79th Annual General

For the full text of the speech, please write to: The Corporate Public Relations Manager, I.T.C. Limited, Virginia House, 37 Chowringbee, Calcutta 700 071

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utional Front Government on all ational policy matters.

BHAGWAN THADANI

Rajiv Gandhi's 'Bharat Yatra' not help him regain power as he gas given a chance but proved unworby of it. People now want to give the new government a chance.

MANAV JALAN

#### A GOOD SHOW

The performance of our hockey team in the BMW tournament in Amsterdam was creditable ("Promising Performance", July 15). With rigorous raining, more international exposure and greater incentives, the present leam can certainly regain its lost glory. ROBIN PALARAMB Madras

#### WELCOME MEASURES

The removal of the discriminatory additional duty on Indian goods has been matched by new concessions to Nepali exporters ("A Timely Thaw", July 15). The exemption of Indian nationals from the ambit of the work permit scheme is also welcome.

Kurnool

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P. SIVARAM PRASAD

#### **EASY MONEY**

Counterfeiting is very easy ("Money Changers". July 15) in a country like ours where excessive use of cash prevails. The use of credit cards can reduce this problem. But the income criteria for credit cards are still out of reach for the common man. These should immediately be relaxed.

Secunderabad

ANNAM S.M.

#### **COMEDY OF TERRORS**

Nowadays, horror films ("The Boom in Doom", July 15) mainly consist of a vulgar display of female anatomy, erotic scenes, insipid music and crude buffoonery. Even the Ramsay Brothers have descended to a crass level.

Meerut

SHASHANK SHEKHAR

#### CONSUMER PROTECTION

The Government has largely adopted a laissez-faire attitude to the use of harmful additives in food products ("Statutory Warning", July 15). What we need is an agency with statutory powers to ban harmful prod-

ucts and order immediate withdrawal of such items.

Bangalore

D.B.N. MURTHY

#### **UNHOLY DEEDS**

The clergy should leave socio-economic activities to the laity which is better equipped to handle them ("Food for Thought", July 15). If there is proof of bungling in the CRS aid programme, the guilty should be booked to avoid a slur on all charitable works.

Kanpur

СИНОТЕВНАІ

#### NOT GUILTY

Your report ("Growing Movement", July 15) comes close to slandering the tribals who have always lived in harmony with their natural environment. They always allowed sufficient time for regeneration of cultivated plots. It is the exploitation by timber contractors and corrupt forest officials that has led to deforestation.

Hyderabad

SUBHASH C. GANDHI

#### FORCE OF HABIT

I am surprised to see the use of the word 'vernacular' for national

POLITICS never seems to change in India. The mindless political convulsions of last fortnight resurrected the nightmarish events visited on the country exactly 10 years ago when Charan Singh and his political sidekick Raj Narain brought down the government of Morarji Desai merely to assuage the kisan leader's insatiable hunger for power. This extract from the INDIA TODAY report on that ugly episode (August 1-15, 1979) is worth reproducing, if only because it makes interesting reading in the context of contemporary happenings.

HE ugly politicians of today are faceless freaks: born of a reckless greed to grab power, fed on unscrupulous ambition to retain it, their ultimate lust is geared to selfpreservation. Nothing else exists in the minds of the khadi-clad effigies that stalk the political ruins of New Delhi these days.

Like bands of itinerant eunuchs roaming the streets to celebrate the curse of their social ostracism, Indian politicians too have come to represent the rock-bottom of Indian society. Faithless, fickle and frag-

#### **BACK TRACK**

mented in their chronic quest for power, they have reduced the ethics of the power game to a squalid striptease. Like chanting hijras, who lift their skirts at every corner to display their deformed genitalia, India's national leaders have come out in the open to parade their savage sins.

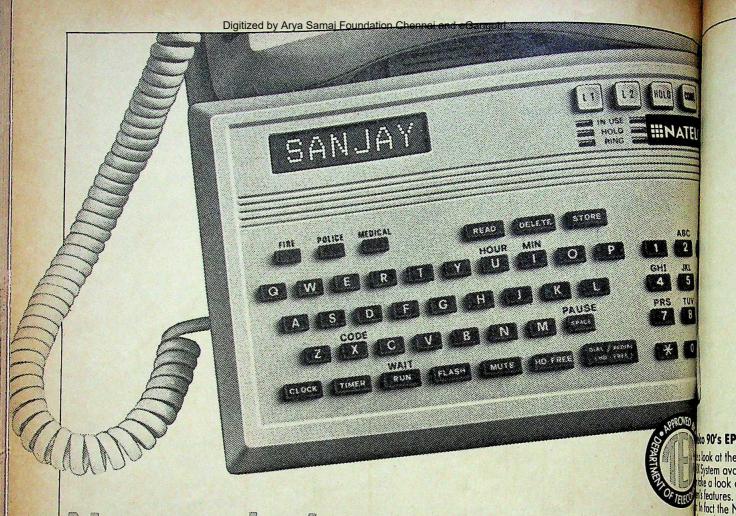
Ironically, politics has become the last refuge of the impotent. The political system has been reduced to a sordid self-image of a few selfobsessed old men fighting their bitter quarrels before gasping their last. A peculiar psychosis has infiltrated Parliament House since last fortnight's dogfight for the premiership began. A new paranoia has seized every politician hurtling in search of a power lobby in the capital. And a new perversion has seeped into the lofty sermonising, the hefty handouts, and the jaded jargon that issue from the vast, colonial bungalows that ministers call their own. Yet there is nothing so unexpected about the deteriorating political morality.

tragedy and then as a farce. And India's political history is littered with the debris of similar power struggles. But the larger farce being enacted in the streets of New Delhi bears other portents. The real issue is not Charan Singh's lust for power nor Raj Narain's sudden antipathy to "communal" organisations but relates to the classic predicament of political life, namely, the relationship between the rulers and the ruled. This relationship, always a tenuous one, has now snapped, with the result that the rulers—the politicians-are on their own, a race apart. And so is the vast mass of people. In between there is a huge gap which makes both of them irrelevant to each other.

Never before has the rift widened so deeply. By their own precedents, and by destroying slowly the possibilities that brought them to power, Indian politicians have become figures out of some grim charade, cardboard cut-outs that populate a half-remembered nightmare, a grotesque underworld species that has no part in the sequence of everyday reality.

History repeats itself, first as a

AUGUST 15, 1990 . INDIA TODAY 9



# Now a telephone that lets you call people by their names, not numbers.

magine a phone that allows you to forget the number of the sophistical you to forget the number of the sophistical you to forget the number of the sophistical you are calling. Just keeper a list of the name or the initials and lot with the name or the initials and lot with the name of the super-smart phone that stores 200 frequently called phone numbers along with the name numbers along with the name of the party. And that's not all the name of t

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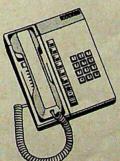
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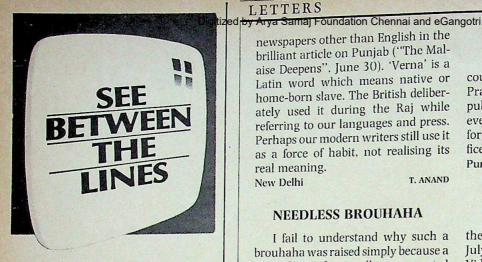
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1/7/37/11

The newsmagazine to watch-

MILESTONES/IT/236

newspapers other than English in the brilliant article on Punjab ("The Malaise Deepens". June 30). 'Verna' is a Latin word which means native or home-born slave. The British deliberately used it during the Raj while referring to our languages and press. Perhaps our modern writers still use it as a force of habit, not realising its real meaning.

New Delhi

T. ANAND

#### **NEEDLESS BROUHAHA**

I fail to understand why such a brouhaha was raised simply because a journalist "of repute" was arrested ("Arrest Fiasco", June 30). The officers who arrested Yusuf Jameel acted in the national interest and none of them should be victimised.

Poonch

V.K. AWASTHI

#### LACKING SENSITIVITY

The photo feature ("A Bawdy Festival", June 15) shows sheer contempt and disgust for the hijras and holds them up to ridicule. It dehumanises them and instead of providing more insight into the eunuchs' community and the Aravan festival, was content at sensationalising a tradition that I am sure is dear to them. Lack of research is also evident as homosexuals, transvestites, transsexuals, hermaphrodites are all clubbed together in the same category. A little more empathy should have been shown to the eunuchs.

New Jersey

SHAMITA DAS DASGUPTA

#### **OPERATION BY-PASS**

In the Sign Posts column (June 15), you have credited Apollo Hospital, Madras for the coronary by-pass surgery without blood transfusion. The operation was actually performed in Apollo Hospital, Hyderabad. Apollo Hospital, Hyderabad SUDHIR NAIR

#### **BUSINESS AS USUAL**

Contrary to your report ("Out of Fashion", June 15), the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) has admitted 85 students to its next session of the diploma programmes commencing on July 30. 1990. It is also starting a one-year certificate course in production technology in October 1990. The programmes and activities of the institute will go on as planned for personnel in the garment industry. NIFT, New Delhi

RATHI VINAY JHA

#### **OUT OF BOUNDS**

I was shocked to learn that the court refrained from sentencing Pradip Maharathi in view of his high public office ("Crack Down", June 15), even though he was found guilty of forgery. Are persons holding high of fice exempt from the rule of law? B.B. BHADKAMKAR

#### **HURDLES REMOVED**

The abeyance order mentioned in the article ("Sudden Short Circuit", July 15) restrained only imports by Videocon, not both imports and exports as stated. The company moved the Bombay High Court which immediately stayed the order. Therefore, as of today, there is no abeyance order on the company, whose business is running uninterrupted.

So far, all exports of colour picture tubes to the USSR were done in custom bond godown, so no customs duty is payable. Therefore, in our view, there was no incentive to get the imported material under-invoiced. No investigation on this by the Directorate of Enforcement (FERA) is pending.

New Delhi

R.N. DHOOT

■ The errors are regretted.

-Editor

#### DENIALS

Your correspondent Bhaskar Roy either manufactures lies or believes them when they are passed on to him ("Preacher Politician", July 31). In other words, he is either completely dishonest or completely gullible. Either way, he makes a poor journalist. You owe me an apology for printing the total fabrication that I sought an appointment with Imain Bukhari ol Delhi's Jama Masjid. I do not have time to waste. I would be grateful if you could print this letter along with an apology.

M.J. AKBAR New Delhi

S. Kamran Mumtaz, public relations officer in the Office of the Jama Masjid, has given to us in writing that someone calling himself M.J. Akbar, Member of Parlia ment, contacted their office twice in February this year seeking a meeting with Imam Bukhari, which the Imam

However, on being informed of this M.J. Akbar reiterated that he had made absolutely no efforts to contact the Iman —Editor

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### ADARK PRAYER

In Ramganj Mandi of Rajasthan the complaint book of the electricity substation was recently given the stature of a religious relic and worshipped for 10 consecutive days.

This happened after a resident of the area, still in the dark several days after



complaining about power breakdown in his house, decided to resort to ritual. He went to the sub-station with all the paraphernalia required for an elaborate puja to please the modernday gods of light. He first garlanded the complaint book, lit the camphor and incense sticks and started reciting the mantra hoping

the power of his prayer could do what his desperate pleadings couldn't.

For 10 days he persisted thus. And so did the officials, claiming that the electricity pole in question had a beehive, which no one was eager to negotiate.

In the meantime the poor man's life remains stung by darkness.

#### DEFENSIVE ODOUR

Taking a cue from a BBC programme that deer can be prevented from trampling on crops by spreading lion droppings around the boundary of the field, an orchard owner in Kumaon got down to work.

After overcoming many problems—including ap-

plying for lion droppings in triplicate at the Delhi Zoo—the determined owner managed to get the precious commodity transported by car all the way up to the hills. He then set about lining the boundary of his orchard with the spoor.

However he soon discovered that the stink was not fearsome enough to de-



ter the deer from entering his orchard. On the contrary, it was potent enough to have petrified his dog which refused to venture near the orchard, leaving the deer feasting till they could eat no more. The defeated farmer is hopping mad, but has decided not to raise a stink about the whole issue.

#### SAFFRON SUSPECTS

It's not only holiness which comes in saffron coloured packages but cheats too. So realised the Delhi Police and the public for the nth time this month.

Two not so honest men hard up for cash thought of an easy way to get out of their difficult days. They



pretended to be godmen from Kashi and put on saffron coloured robes and pious looks. And sure enough they pocketed much money after promising moksha for a price.

But soon their karma caught up with them. The two confronted an unsuspecting gent walking out of a bank and asked him to hand over his wallet and walk 20 feet backwards, if he wanted to climb a few steps higher in life. But the man kept an eye peeled for the sadhus, and true enough soon found them backtracking, with his purse. He raised an alarm. Now the saffron duo recline behind bars, seeking salvation themselves.

#### CALLING THE SHOTS

The markets having turned fiercely competitive the seller can no longer call the shots. That is what a retired engineer in Patna found out early this month after advertising that his gun was for sale.

prospective buyer

who came to examine the gun was informed about the gun's greatness and also that it was loaded. Unfortunately the retired engineer soon discovered that he himself was to be the first target. The determined buyer however decided to strike the deal by threatening to pull the trigger.



Soon the retired engineer was locked in a room in his own house while the buyer escaped with the gun, and continues to remain at large.

As for the shell-shocked retired engineer, he has solemnly vowed never to strike another gun-deal within firing range.

### BUMS COURSE

Ayurveda, homeopathy and unani are not much sought-after courses of study. And so the Karnataka Government recently put out prominent advertisements to attract the best possible talent for one-year degree course in these



subjects in government and private colleges.

The Government offered Bachelors Degree in Ayurvedic Medicine (BAMS) and the Bachelors Degree in Homeopathic Medicine (BHMS). And in keeping with the pattern declared its Bachelor's Degree in Unani Medicine to be BUMS.

How many bright young students applied to graduate as 'bums' after a year is unknown. But then the bureaucrats could always argue what better name for a course in a unique branch of Indian medicine which has been pushed to the posterior of science.

#### **Jumping Jacks**

· Rajiv Gandhi may not have succeeded in building up street fighters in the manner of his departed brother Sanjay, but he has certainly attracted to his side a



babelesque cadre of parliamentarians whose decibel level is capable of triggering off the Richter scale.

During the last session of Parliament their voices drowned out just about every debate that threatened to embarrass the erstwhile ruling party or their chief. With the monsoon session of the legislature around the corner, some of them have been planning a slightly different strategy. A group of Rajiv's parliamentary Praetorian Guard has been inquiring about the penalty for jumping onto the floor of the Lok Sabha from the balcony of the Rajya Sabha VIP gallery.

These Congress(I) diehards from the upper House have been heard plotting a novel strategy: they will watch with restraint the Lok Sabha proceedings from the VIP gallery. But if Rajiv comes under unfair attack and his partymen do not defend him adequately from the floor, they will, literally, jump to his rescue. Without parachutes. But on a wing and a slogan. Whatever happens, these Congressmen cannot be accused of not thinking before they leap.

#### **Swearing Ceremony**

• Delhi, not Chandigarh, seems to have become Haryana's capital. Not only is the conspicuous Haryana Bhawan on Copernicus Road the house of intrigue where conspiracies are hatched, it is also the mini Raj Bhawan where chief ministers are sworn in. The lawns of this mansion have in the last eight months witnessed four ceremonies: swearing-in Chautala (twice), B.D. Gupta and Hukum Singh.

Each time the organisers have to go hustling in search of new tent house renters to put up the shamiana as previous bills remain unpaid. Quipped a senior officer: "We've virtually been to all parts of Delhi. While we have to arrange for the



swearing-in, we also have to listen to all the swearing-at."

#### Truth Will Out

 Railway Minister George Fernandes loves to hear the sound of his voice and is endlessly speechifying. Last month, while signing an agreement between the Cen-





tre and four state governments to set up the Konkan Corporation, George gushed: "It is a dream come true for the people of the west coast." The total cost, he revealed, would be around Rs 1,200 crore.

And then came the punch line, or at least that's how the Deccan Herald reported it. In indicating a deadline for the project, the minister said that "the corruption will start functioning from the end of the month".

Printers' devil, reportorial mischief, or Freudian slip. The point is that the readers of the Herald lapped it up as a rare instance of ministerial candour. In the Indian Express the Truth Involves Us All. But in other newspapers the truth sometimes just creeps in.

#### Cupid Kuldip

Commissioner • High Kuldip Nayar, known for his affability and interest in socialising with people of all persuasions recently had occasion to play political cupid at his residence in London.

He found himself playing host to at least two national leaders who are hardly likely to be dinner guests at the same party. BJP's Lal Krishna Advani, and Communist supremo Jyoti Basu found themselves rubbing shoulders at a dinner given by Nayar. The piece de resistance: a sarod recital by Amjad Ali Khan.

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There was also a third surprise guest-Farooq Abdullah, who has been the object of scathing BJP criticism on the Kashmir issue.



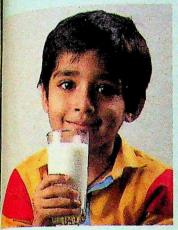
Some local Indian journal ists attempted their own diplomacy by trying to arrange a secret meeting between Farooq and Advani. But Advani rejected the overture insisting that while he would be happy to meet the former chief minister openly and keep the contents of their conversation a secret he was not interested in any hush-hush conclave.

#### TAIL PIECE

A gathering at a paan shop was watching one of the last episodes of Mahabharat. "If I let this selfdestructive war go on what will history call me?" lamented Dhritarashtra.

Before Sanjay could reply someone in the audience piped up: "Devi Lai."

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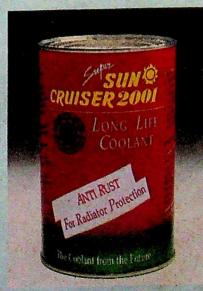
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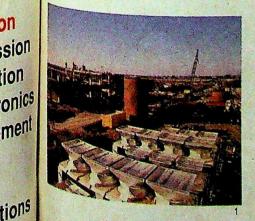
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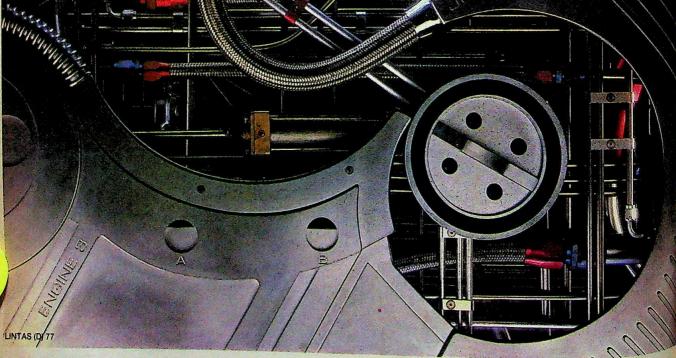


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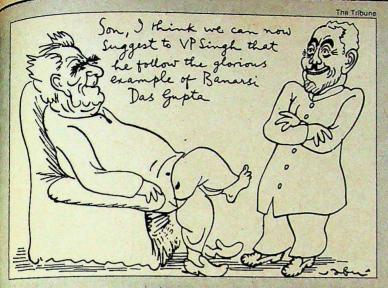
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- I give more emphasis to political change than to the change in government. ■ V.P.SINGH, after the Janata Dal crisis was averted
- Ido not want to go down in history as a man who wrecked the Janata Dal. ■ DEVI LAL, after the Political Affairs Committee meeting, in Patriot
- Most people have an 'ism' they believe in. I believe in socialism. Indian bureaucrats have their own god—not possibilism.
  - MADHU DANDAVATE. Union finance minister, in Business India
- There is one person who will beat Hegde hundreds of times over and that person is Sharad Pawar. A.R. ANTULAY in Sunday Mail
- My image as an anti-establishment figure is what I miss most.
  - RULDIP NAYAR, High Commissioner to UK, in The Illustrated Weekly of India
- Chandra Shekhar is a saint.
  - MULAYAM SINGH YADAV in Sunday
- I am in support of principled politics.
- RAJIV GANDHI in The Statesman
- Those who were accusing the Nehru family of establishing dynastic rule In the country are now playing the same politics.
  - BAL THACKERAY, Shiv Sena supremo, in The Telegraph
- This is the first time in history that a prime minister will return soon after resigning. CHANDRA SHEKHAR in The Indian Express
- V.P. Singh talks of value-based politics. I have known him for 32 years. I know his values. R.K. DHAWAN, Congress(I) MP
- In the kitchen the cook—whom I managed to interview—was shredding documents with an Italian noodle-cutter belonging to Rajiv Gandhi's wife BRUCE CHATWIN, in his posthumously published book What Am I Doing Here, describing Mrs Gandhi courting arrest at her home in 1977
- I didn't consider myself a massive underdog.
  - ANAND VISHWANATHAN, Indian Grandmaster after making It to the candidate's round in The Indian Express
- Idon't care if a man is married or not, younger or older, if I like somebody proceed if I get the right response from him.
  - RUPA GANGULY, Mahabharat's Draupadi in Sunday

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## Change the System

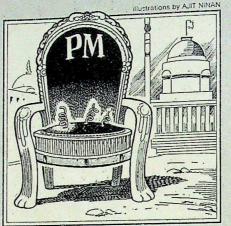
THE recent political crisis should serve to catalyse a comprehensive re-examination of whether the Westminster style of parliamentary democracy is really suited to a country as diverse as India.

Much has changed since Independence. Today, the largest, best financed and most powerful political party lies in a shambles licking its wounds. Regional parties have not only become more powerful but are ruling important states and demanding greater autonomy and decentralisation.

As the process continues, the nation will have to learn to decentralise while still maintaining a stable government at the Centre that can survive political buffeting of crosswinds from the states.

Any rethinking about changing the Indian system of government must grapple with a real problem—that of the instability of a prime minister every time political heavyweights in his party, particularly in Parliament, begin extra-constitutional jockeying for power.

Actually, Indian elections have been personality-oriented. The voters pick a printe minister to lead them much



in the fashion (even though the mechanics may be different) that Americans choose a president.

Unfortunately, a popularly elected prime minister often finds himself subject to blackmail and destabilisation by party satraps whose wheeling and dealing can, in effect, defy the electoral mandate of the people.

Whenever there has been a debate on switching over to a presidential system of government, people have reacted with horror because they subliminally link presidents with dictators. This need

not be so. In the American system, for example, where there's a complete separation of powers the chief executive once elected cannot be held captive to party manipulations and petty ambitions of boorish satraps. And yet he and his cabinet are subjected to more control by the legislature than any prime minister.

The American system, with all its drawbacks, is worth studying. It successfully combines decentralisation and stability with greater government accountability. The Indian system lags hopelessly in all these areas so crucial to the functioning of a democracy.

### **Pathetic Posturing**

O matter how cleverly Vishwanath Prätap Singh may try and defend his resignation-strategy, tactic, Gandhian renunciation, machiavellian blackmail-there is no getting away from the fact that it was just one more example of sanctimonious posturing that failed to elevate his image or that of his government to any spiritual high.

Temporally, it just did not wash with the people who elected him to high office. The prime minister has been known to argue that he communicates in the idiom of the com-

mon man and that his actions just cannot be understood by effete intellectuals and the armchair thinkers of the press. This is just so much hogwash.

The man on the street does not like the leader of his nation making a spectacle of himself when the need of the hour is determined action against equally determined bullies bent upon subjugating the entire political process to blind ambition and unabashed venality. This is precisely the time when the people of the land demand that their chief executive stand tall and hang tough.

But V.P. Singh failed them in this instance. He has been in command throughout the eight months he has been in office, despite his minority government, because he has



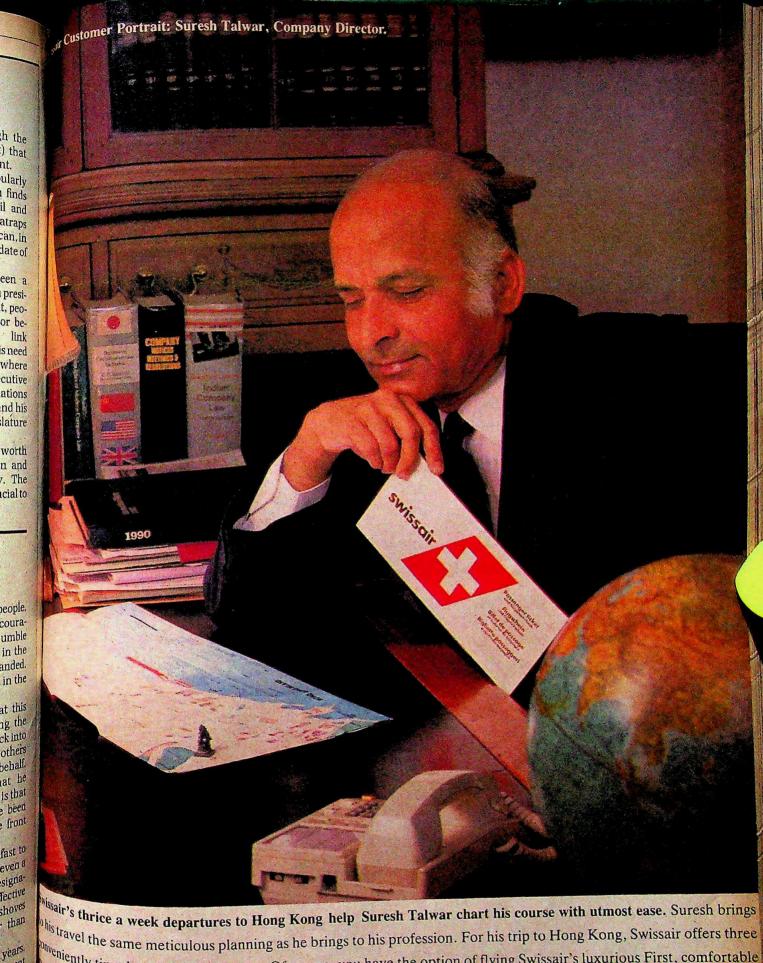
enjoyed the affection of the people. Because people saw him as a courageous man who was able to humble the strongest political party in the nation virtually single-handed. And by daring to fight it out in the mud and grime.

It is hard to believe that this same man, instead of taking the bull by the horns chose to duck into a corner, sulking, and let others sort out the crisis on his behalf. There was little doubt that he would come back. The point is that as a leader he should have been leading the battle from the front

and not fighting a rear guard action.

True, Gandhiji used to win by threatening to fast to death. But Singh is no Gandhi and people don't see even a remote resemblance. By tactics such as his recent resignation Singh is reinforcing in the public mind the one effective slogan his enemies have used against him—that he shoves his tail between his legs and runs away rather than confront crises head on.

The voters elected him prime minister for five years And they want him to last out his term. But his recent behaviour has begun to instil doubts about his capabilities as a leader, and worse, corroded the image of his govern ment which had much going for it.

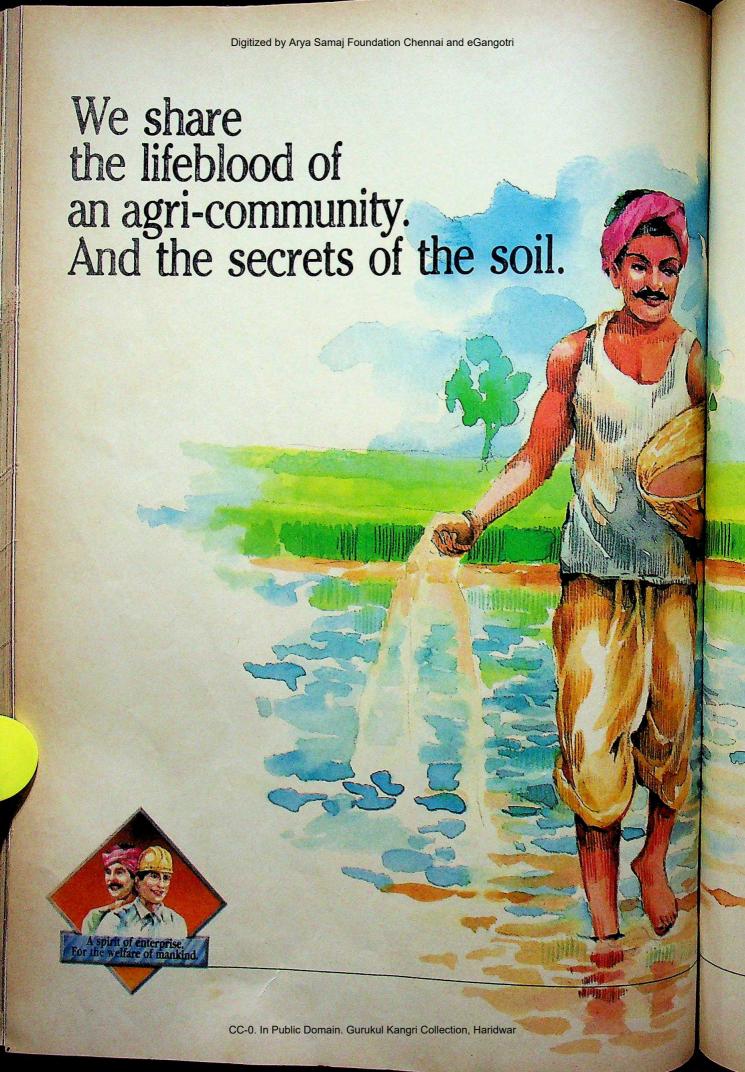


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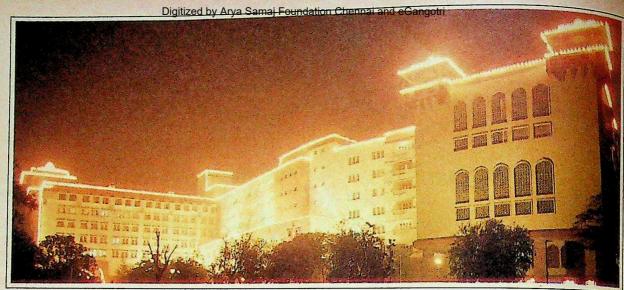
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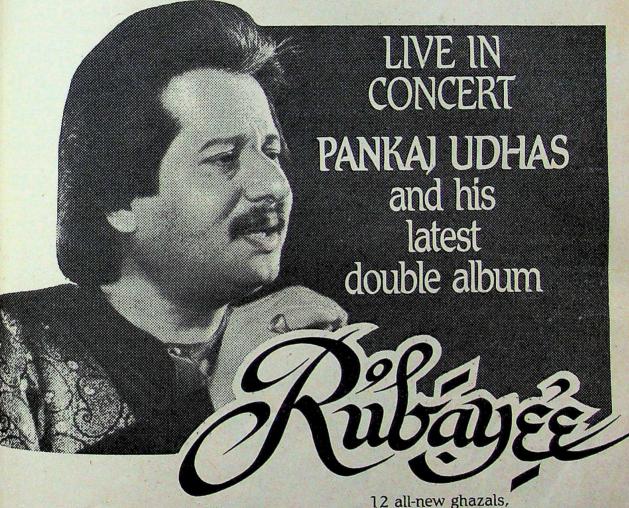
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V.P. SINGH

# The End of an Aura

By INDERJIT BADHWAR and PRABHU CHAWLA

CALL it high drama, dogfight, black comedy, farce. Whatever it was, the entire nation watched in helpless horror and growing revulsion a sordid battle that had come perilously close to destroying India's second experiment with a coalition government.

In the denouement a prime minister was virtually paralysed into inaction for 24 hours, offered his resignation and then took it back just as sheepishly as he had handed it in. A cabinet survived and a controversial chief minister bit the dust. Everybody survived, yet nobody survived. They survive but as rivals. Urban versus rural. Jat versus Jat versus everybody else.

For the first time in 40 years there is no core party with a discernible leader. Every manner of cook and scullery worker, it seemed, was churning up the political broth while the chief chef, Vishwanath Prala Singh, skulked in the shadows.

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He did everything but lead. That he survived, as dighes, his government, was not because of fortitude or con the on summate action but because public opinion, a handle shis as of determined party leaders and the National Front empl parliamentary allies were resolute in demanding a hat comes. r to the spreading political inanition.

And the threat of even bloodier skirmishes erupling fa futur is real. The wounds are ugly, dark and deep. For the Janata Dal, the crisis represented the end of an aura

Ahead, instead of promises to keep, lies a confronta intounto tion with more threats and even more uncertainties, a legage. D wrapped up in a jumbled configuration of personalities instability and dangerous possibilities. The cauldron bubbles.

DEVI LAL vs V.P. SINGH

Will they fight again?

HE original sin was for one to be born a Rajput and the other a Jat, scions of traditionally warring communities. The sin is compounded by a class distinc-

tion that may be even more irreconcilable: the raja a feudal Rajput with a public school background, the Tau a gravellyvoiced rustic. Both stubborn as mules. Normally, the twain should never have met. But pushed into a symbiotic mating through an accident of history they clash like fire-stones.

And why shouldn't they? Each tries to appropriate the same claim to fame-the destruction of Rajiv Gandhi. Both are right. Without Devi Lal's support, Singh may not have become prime minister and opposition unity would have been just a buzzword. But V.P. Singh did become the prime minister. If that were acceptable to Devi Lal what irked him was Singh's haughty aloofness. They barely greet each other. Except when there's a crisis. And then it's always too late.

The Jat may have swallowed his pride but certainly not his pound of flesh. And that's what he has been demanding inces-

santly. The village chieftain is now a national politician wit spear to appropriate media attention. Haryanvi Jats are no long satisfied with crumbs in Haryana. They expect their Tau bring them chunks of the national cake: ambassadors, chi

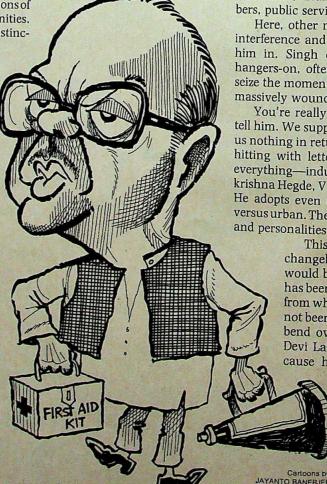
secretaries, Rajya Sabha members, deput secretaries, Planning Commission men bers, public service commission members

Here, other ministers resent the Tau interference and plead with Singh to rehim in. Singh does so. And Devi la hangers-on, often through son Chaute seize the moment to prey on the old man massively wounded super-ego.

You're really the prime minister, the tell him. We supported you. But you've f us nothing in return. And Devi Lal attack hitting with letters and speeches again policy. everything—industrial krishna Hegde, V.P. Singh, the Jan Morch He adopts even a special ideologyversus urban. Then he flips, praising political and personalities he has attacked earlied

This is a dangerous trait. He changeless, yet he changes would be folly to assume that has been tamed. For the dynamic from which the clashes stem not been altered. And for Single bend over backwards to place Devi Lal would be sure folly cause he would find the of

elements within Janata Dal turi He hostile. them, too, to sund If a single dinner of create such severe indiges litical the P within



Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

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ional Frontis employment generation anding a trans, roads, rural technolto. The conflict is a blueprint shes eruping fa future ideological clash. The complexities multiply. of an aur aga's Jan Morcha allies, to whom he Thas an emotional attachment, want a confront into unload Devi Lal as a piece of excess ertainties, a gage. Devi Lal, they say, is the symbol personalities instability in the Government. And in

ter to demonstrate the Government's ability to the public Singh must at least politician with Towar to be firm with Devi Lal.

Singh's immediate strategy will be to minue to isolate his rival by cementing BJP and Left into an anti-Devi Lal nt, personally lobbying with pro-Devi achiefministers and MPs, and blocking

appointees to important party and government posts.

That only brings out the lion in the Jat. He may be isolated the time being. But he will eventually hit back, honing his iti-urban slogan into an anti-Singh political cudgel, and avass directly with the powerful caste combinations he had together for the Janata Dal's electoral advantage against e Congress(I).

But how far will he take the fight? There's at least a pattern hope. Each time he has gone to the brink, he has pulled tack. He wants to be remembered in history as Devi Lal and a Charan Singh clone.

That is the only argument that silences him into a andicum of introspection. He yearns for respect, something proud raja cannot give him. But perhaps, if he is able to mehis ego and control the pressure groups that egg him on, may eventually earn that accolade from a more important udge—history.

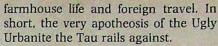
#### sume that ARUN NEHRU VS DEVI LAL

Who will destroy whom first?

HE prime minister can still manage to project a rustic bonhomie with which he is capable of casting a temporary spell over the Tau.

But what of Arun Nehru who is a Mephistopheles That in Devi Lal's book of political demonology?

The two are as opposite as a dharamsala from the Oberoi Grand. Or, one an invading virus, the other a vigilant aniibody. Nehru sees Devi Lal as a Charan Singh-come-lately. Object Arun as a Nehru-come-lately, Nehru of imported of the Sees Arun as a Nehru-come-lately, Nehru of the theese-eating fame, guzzler of Pepsis, connoisseur of the



Even the traits they have in common produce not harmony but megatons of fission. Both are imperious and want their commands obeyed immediately. Nehru inherits his style from his days as no-nonsense corporate manager where the watchwords were implement, implement, implement. Devi Lal from the authority of the chaupal chieftain. But there's a crucial difference. Devi Lal is upfront and stentorian. Nehru is the quintessential backroom manoeuvrer with a libidinous urge to master, to dominate, to control.

In his own right, Nehru is kingmaker, not only the Jan Morcha strategist who helped outflank Rajiv Gandhi but also the Janata Dal master-plotter who was able to cut off Devi Lal from his son Chautala and Chandra Shekhar at the last minute and achieve the installation of V.P Singh as prime minister.

Devi Lal is also kingmaker. Both kingmakers want to dominate the Government. Nehru through powerful businessmen with whom he is popular, through the party funds he controls (which gives him significant control over influential members of Parliament) and through the powerful public sector

bureaucracy. Devi Lal holds him responsible for blocking his appointees to the public sector with the help of allies like Inder Kumar Guiral, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, Arif Mohammed Khan and M.S. Gurupadaswamy.

They have wounded one another too deeply for the animus to die. Devi Lal is still smarting over the resignation strategy conceived by Nehru which led to the resignation of Chautala and caused a shameful loss of face in Haryana.

And Devi Lal hit back where it hurts most-accusing Nehru and Arif of big-business related kickbacks, the first time a cabinet minister has made such serious charges in writing against his own colleagues.

Nehru is not a man of the masses but of strategy. In electoral politics heis no match for Devi Lal, and were the battle between the two to be decided within the format of new

elections, Devi Lal would probably worst him.

But the battle is within the framework of the power structure. In the fight for control and influence, Nehru has the edge (as proven by his masterfully timed resignation).

Nehru's strategy is to destroy Devi Lal's image before another crisis that may trigger off a general election or force a political realignment. Even as



Devi Lal will continue to hurl charges of corruption against Nehru, raking up, for instance, charges of foreign bank accounts and even defence kickbacks, Nehru will not be found sitting on his hands. It will be a proxy war with Devi Lal using Chandra Shekhar and friendly Congressmen, and Nehru

making dexterous use of the press.

Nehru is a skilful muckraker who will ensure that the CBI inquiry into Meham does not flag, and old cases such as the controversial death of Chautala's daughter-in-law Supriya in 1987 and allegations of kickbacks in land deals by Devi Lal's family do not fade away. Today, Nehru has been able to project himself as a saviour of the Government and of value-based politics while, at the same time, casting Devi Lal into the role of wrecker and promoter of the politics of nepotism. Nehru, so far, is the unbattered victor.

#### CHIEF MINISTERS vs V.P. SINGH

Who calls the shots?

'N the Government as ordained by V.P. Singh, his party chief ministers find themselves engaged in a delicate balancing act. They want Singh to survive but at the same time they don't want him to become too powerful. The idea is to keep him guessing a little.

Prominent among them are Chimanbhai Patel, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Laloo Prasad Yadav and Biju Patnaik. The most critical role they played was mobilising members of parliament from their states on behalf of Singh's election as prime minister.

They still wield tremendous clout over the MPs from their states and lobby directly with the prime minister for the interests of their constituencies.

They are more independent of the Centre than ever before and they have begun to guard this new-found independence with a rare jealousy. This is both novel and interesting.

Consider, for example, the fact that unlike Congress(I) chief ministers, who spent virtually their entire lives cloistered in various state

bhawans pleading for appointments with the prime minister or his cabinet colleagues. Mulayam Singh has spent no more than five days in the capital during the last five months, and Biju Patnaik only three.

A weaker Centre enhances their own power. And in this scheme of things they are not willing to be taken for granted as the lobbyists for any single centre of power in Delhi—Devi Lal or V.P. Singh.

And the proof of this came during the recent crisis when no chief minister, with the exception of Laloo Prasad Yadav, spoke against Chautala. They played the role of mediators and power brokers whose advice and consent was sought by all key players.

At the same time, they were cautiously biased towards Singh. After all, he is still their best vote catcher and it would be suicidal to cut off the apron strings at this juncture.

They didn't call all the shots in the recent crisis but they certainly called more shots than any of their predecessors of the Congress(I).

And as politics at the Centre heat up and national leaders lobby with them for support, one thing is certain. It is the chief ministers who will be calling many more of the critical shots in the future.

#### THE BOMMAI FACTOR

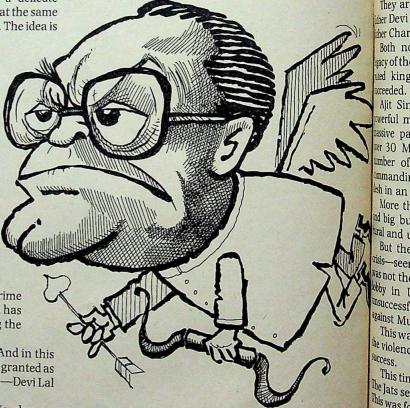
Dark horse emerges

ARTY President S.R. Bommai, was first supported to that post by Chandra Shekhar, Devi Lal and Ajit Single who viewed him as a manipulable rural-based nonen tity. After which V.P. Singh adopted him.

A land-owning Lingayat who has never dressed in any other colour but white, Bommai is an advocate by profession and loves to puff on State Express 555 cigarettes whe involved in heated discussions. His is a fate not very easi 115 A tolerated by the weak-kneed.

In fact, Bommai showed that he was made of sterner stu the day he took over as party president in May. His first chon on that very day, was to inform Devi Lal, his very own patron NE a that Chautala should resign or else he'd be sacked.

That was during the first round. But the message wenton that a strange and unpredictable virus had entered the Janas Aducate Dal's bloodstream as president.



At 66 people sometimes have to rise to the level of men responsibilities thrust on them. And this is really what nobody from nowhere in Karnataka began doing when found himself in the limelight as a national politician.

After storming into the capital, he gave a piece of his mile to Single account to Si first to Singh remonstrating with him for allowing Chautal second sweeping. second swearing in and then did some straight talking Chautala, raking him over the coals for the resignation Banarsi Das Gupta.

Singh had also to answer some other embarrassi questions from his party president. Among them: under the circumstances and procedures was Sanjay Singh, a relative who is involved. relative who is involved in a murder inquiry, appointed Rajya Sabha manh Rajya Sabha member?

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This tin the Jats se this was fo trong ant looking lik Thetim would have Chautala 1

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that's the And the imperative whichhen lat wars a assertiveness will surely lead to an increasingly grant role for him in party affairs, and perhaps minimise kerings and serve to insulate the prime minister from bive political flak when new office-bearers are chosen

party elections held.

The past 20 years the president of the ruling party has president. Represident and party has supported for been party president. Bommai's role represents the nd Ajit Singi based nonen wion of an entirely new political process within the party greater dispersal of the centres of ressed in any ser.

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own patron NE a dhoti-clad, foul-mouthed pugilist, pursuing power as if engaged in a game rage wenton of kabaddi. The other, an urbane, wested the Janan reducated former IBM executive who could adwell with the guests at a private Rajiv

They are both inheritors. Chautala, of his ber Devi Lal's ambitions. Ajit Singh, of his ther Charan Singh's party and property.

Both now want to inherit the political acy of their forbearers and emerge as undisued king of the Jats. And neither has weeded.

Ajit Singh has much going for him: a werful ministership which is the fount of assive patronage, influence if not control it 30 MPs at the Centre and twice the mber of MLAs in Uttar Pradesh, and a mmanding presence in western Uttar Prash in an area the size of Haryana.

More than that, as a believer in industry ad big business, Ajit Singh combines both ral and urban backing.

But the fight—at least during the latest seemed to have gone out of him. This is not the Ajit Singh who took on Devi Lal's by in Uttar Pradesh by fighting, albeit assuccessfully, for the chief ministership, against Mulayam Singh Yadav.

This was not the Ajit Singh who went to Meham following violence and attacked Chautala, again without notable

This time he chose to stay a friendly, even silent mediator. le lats seemed to have made peace. And even then he lost. was for him, a heaven-sent opportunity to have taken a booking anti-Chautala stand, and he would have come out looking like a winner.

The time could not have been more appropriate. The world Nould have been on his side. It was a virtual surrender. And if thautala lost, so did Ajit Singh.

For in order to emerge as a strong Jat leader, you have not only to stand up and be counted but also to stand up and fight. In the surface of it it looked as if the Jats had made truce.

But All One and without a But Ajit Singh knows that Jat feuds do not end without a Winder, His image hasn't been sullied as Chautala's has. And hat's the advantage he still has.

And that's what he will exploit when the ruthless hoperatives of Jat politics compel him to do battle again, whichharm of Jat politics compel him to do battle again, thich he mustifhe is to stake his claim as the Jat supremo. The lat wars are far from over.

#### CHANDRA SHEKHARTHE CHAMELEON

Getting marginalised?

IS Cassius-like lean and hungry looks provide a window into his soul-tormented by jealousy, unre-Lquited power, and painful pangs of anti-establishmentaria socialist yearnings.

He is the other Rajput. The one who never made it.

They called him a Young Turk in the '60s because he believed he was the natural inheritor of power after Shastri. Later Mrs Gandhi just chopped him to pint-size.

He was a torn man when his own mentor Jayaprakash Narayan blessed Morarji Desai for the prime ministership during the Janata period.

For 11 years he carried the Janata torch, a lonely bitter man, trying to unite the Opposition, when along comes V.P. Singh—another Johnny-come-lately from Congress(I), and worse, from his home state, Uttar Pradesh-and steals his show.

Not that the man is without capabilities. Chandra Shekhar is articulate and consistent in ideology, no matter how outmoded.

He has grassroots backing in



Bihar, Assam and Karnataka. Members of Parliament respect him because he is a seasoned politician and a tactician. But in his bid for power

he behaves like an agitator, and as a man who wants only his voice to prevail. His fatal flaw is that he is able to

project not his capabilities but only his ambition.

He switches sides without the faintest show of guilt-pro-Devi Lal and then against Devi Lal. Attacking Rajiv Gandhi one day

and praising him the next. When Chautala was first sworn in after Meham Chandra Shekhar quietly backed him in a bid to win over the Devi Lal camp against V.P. Singh.

But he missed a golden opportunity of damaging his arch foe V.P. Singh. Had he taken a tough anti-Chautala stand this time and blamed Singh for desecrating his



principles he would have scored a kill. But he thought Singh would sink on his own and he would emerge by default. It didn't work.

Politics means having the skill to seize the moment. But while Chandra Shekhar remained silent others like Arun Nehru took the lead and stole what should have been Chandra Shekhar's anti-V.P. Singh thunder. Yet again, Chandra Shekhar was reduced to playing a marginal role. Like he has been doing for a long time now.

He still has admirers in Parliament—people like Subodh Kant Sahay and Hari Kishore Singh, whose political careers he helped and whom he brought to the Centre.

Even they no longer follow him blindly. They're young, and they don't want to jeopardise their careers by playing the wrecking game. Nor do they want to get hooked on to his battered bandwagon as it wobbles along the periphery of the political arena, its every attempt at barging on to centrestage scuttled.

But Chandra Shekhar cannot sit silent. He hasn't since 1969. He will pounce on Singh—on ideological grounds, on economic policy, on liberalisation, on industrial policy—and try and hamstring the Government by getting the Congress(I)

to back his moves in Parliament. His enemy's enemy is after all, his friend.

ernment so that the BJP gains politically at its expense. State ernment so that the by garage enough so that the Congress(I) is denied any speedy re-entry enough so that the BIP's cost. And weak as the BIP's cost. enoughso that the congress cost. And weak enoughs power which would be at the BJP's cost. And weak enoughs power which would be that the BJP can gain electoral advantage in any future that the election. This strategy shows clearly in the BJP's withdrawald election. This strategy support for Chautala in Haryana and Mulayam Singh Yada in Uttar Pradesh.

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And this is what causes jitters in the Left. It is not in the interest to see the BJP gaining increasing credibility in north India to the extent that it may one day be able to replace the th is th Janata Dal. And so it would also like to perpetrate a credit and stable National Front Government in order to preventile BIP from gaining ground.

The imperative for both is to prevent any immediate collapse of the V.P. Singh Government. Both need stability and the power they now enjoy in order to consolidate the political battle that lies ahead if the Government collapses.

#### THE BATTERED PRIME MINISTER

Has he learned a lesson?

CTUALLY, there's been no respite for Vishwanath Pratap Singh He's been fighting on the appointment of office-bearers, allocationed tickets, appointment of bureaucrats. He lost some, he won some, but he never los his image as he did this time.

Perhaps he had it coming to him. H had retreated into a style of functioning in which he never expressed his points view openly before his colleagues. H began keeping his own counsel. became a proud loner, above politic above it all. Trusting nobody.

It just didn't work. For he wounds alienating some of his closest political allies, and when the crunch came-upl the point of his own resignation—nour could figure out what was on his min what kind of deal he had made, whomis trusted, whom he didn't. No one eve knew whether the resignation itself we part of some bizarre strategem. In absence of communication there we total chaos.

What was his real equation with Dr Lal? Even his colleagues wondered. he want to get rid of him? Did he him to stay? Why did he not take resolution

Singh's style was taking a batteril within his own party. But what has his his image even more is the gradual dawning reality that he cannot sackly Lal without precipitating even agree crisis within his party. And even does everything he could to please deputy prime minister there is no wal can rule in peace. In other words patriarch from Haryana will be a per nial problem.

The party may back himingeting of a political embarrassment

#### **ANXIOUS ALLIES**

Backing Singh but uneasy future

HERE'S no real love lost between the BJP and the Left or between the two polar parties and the Janata Dal but they continue locked in an embrace of mutual benefit.

Both parties gained substantially during the anti-Congress(I) wave and they see the continuance of the National Front Government as an opportunity to expand their own influence and electoral prospects.

The role played by Jyoti Basu and L.K. Advani in resolving the resignations crisis was the clearest of any party or politician. They insisted their backing was only for a government led by V.P.

Singh. They wanted him to continue.

But the BJP and Left were also shaken by the crisis. Whatever the technicalities of their support for the Government from

"outside", the people by and large perceive them as part of the Government and any loss of credibility of the Janata Dal erodes their own credibility.

The Left and Right want stability not because they see the Janata Dal as the saviour of the nation but because they want to strengthen their own positions and prevent the Congress(I) from re-emerging. But both parties are looking ahead-beyond the Janata Dal. Their leaders appear convinced that the present Government may not last out its full term.

In the BJP's scheme of things the Janata Dal should continue as a stable—but weak—govexpense, Stalk eedy re-entry veak enoughs in any futur s withdrawald m Singh Yada

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ala, but Singh is not at all sure whether he will have the to get rid of the Jat leader. Devi Lal is no lightweight. the only national rural leader in the Janata Dal. And Rajiv's heydays it was his dramatic victory in Haryana amajor jolt to the Congress(I) and to the desolate, are a major jolt to the Congress, the first delusions of able to come back to power.

there were other considerations. Dumping Devi Lal would have been tantamount to asserting that V.P. whis the sole power centre in the party—a development would have alienated the chief ministers and other office was and opened up the party to more internal friction and agaments.

The stark fact is that except for the resignation of three MPs asingle chief minister, member of parliament or state unit eldent condemned Chautala. V.P. Singh may have residuent support, but the party was not inclined to take on the longity

The prime minister has learned that he's not totally in tage. Also, that if he wants to consolidate his own position, emust reach out more to his colleagues, to learn to confide in the express himself more forthrightly.

He has already initiated the process—more dinner meetys with chief ministers, more cabinet meetings, the estabthment of a National Front Secretariat for continuous peraction on sensitive government matters, and acceptance

faproposal from the Left for establishment of an all-party advisory body to went matters from reaching the kind flashpoint that they did.

The initial panic is dying down, as it aust. And V.P. Singh is not entirely arong in asserting that what the party

renthrough may be another mocess in its growth. Another simble in the tortuous evolumary process of a party as it spires to grow from a fledging kid to a bristling adolesmand then to a full grown an capable of confronting the vagaries of life.

Personality clashes in India's ruling parties are not Bew. Even Jawaharlal Nehru Sught giants like Acharya Sipalani and Rajendra Prasad who were claimants to

Wwer because of their equal participaion in the freedom movement. Mrs Gandhi battled the Syndicate.

Similarly, Devi Lal, Chandra Shekhar, even Ajit Singh believe they are equal claimants to power because for the ouster of Rajiv Gandhi. They do they want V.P. Singh to corner all the credit, all the glory.

The plus side is that the longer the Janata Dal sticks logether, the greater the possibility that its leaders will stay another, and work out a modus vivendi. Unlike the last mously chosen leader, the V.P. Singh Government was born in the throes of a conspiracy. And until its leaders learn to communicate with one congress(I) government, in which Rajiv Gandhi was unaning the throes of a conspiracy. And until its leaders learn to londerstand each other—and work harmoniously out of that

understanding—it is fated to perish in a controversy, con-

ceived by its own leaders.

What Singh must not forget is that while he may be indebted to the machinations of a few for putting him in power, it is to the people's man-

date that he must ultimately look for sustenance.

The Janata Dal is still an experiment in which disparate individuals and idiosyncracies are living together for the first time.

And that is why its leaders should ask themselves questions. If they split, where do they go? Will the voters forgive them? If the worst happens, when again can they ever think of grouping together and make yet another bid for power. And if they do not succeed this time will it be possible at all for a coalition of parties to come to power at the Centre?

Fortunately for the National Front Government the Congress(I) has still not got its act together. Neither does the opposition party and its president Rajiv Gandhi have the strength or

the stamina or the strategy to take advantage of the state of the Janata Dal.

For all the upheavals, the Janata Dal is still an alternative centrist party, an absolute necessity in a country like India, that may yet be destined to carve out for itself a niche in the nation's political history.

And for that, V.P. Singh's burden of leadership becomes all the more heavier.

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# Who did What and to Whom

FOR almost a week, the crisis precipitated by the reinduction of Om Prakash Chautala as Haryana chief minister brought the working of the Central Government to a virtual halt. The nation watched, initially with bewilderment, then growing anger, as

machinations, intrigue, horse-trading, and back. stabbing consumed the stalwarts of the Janata Dal. INDIA TODAY reconstructs in detail the dramatic developments that almost led to the fall of the National Front Government seven months after it was formed

#### Did Vishwanath Pratap Singh and Devi Lal strike a secret deal?

HEIR relationship has been one of mounting tension. For months, their supporters have been trying to bring them together. One of them, Som Pal Singh, a Rajya Sabha member and a relative of Devi Lal, decided to take the issue by the horns in a meeting with V.P. Singh on June 21. Why don't the two of you at least talk? The prime minister



was his usual self. Neither a yes, nor a no. But the samaritan began mediating in earnest.

On June 25, he brought Ranjit Singh, Devi Lal's younger son, to V.P. Singh for a meeting. Ranjit offered to help improve their working relationship. V.P. Singh agreed there was need for better communication. Ranjit and Sompal interpreted this as a signal for a go-ahead.

The next day, at 4:30 p.m., Devi Lal was woken from his siesta at a Bangalore nature cure retreat by the arrival of Ranjit and Sompal. Ranjit told his father: "Bauji, apke dushman apki halat Charan Singh se bhi badtar kar denge." (Father, your enemies will reduce you to a state worse than Charan Singh.) Devi Lal growled back: "Who told you I'm trying to wreck the Government? It will survive, and I will meet V.P. Singh." And he told Ranjithe'd like to bring him to Delhi as a Rajya Sabha member.

Devi Lal returned to New Delhi on July 7, to a dinner invitation from V.P. Singh. In the two hours they spent together, they discussed the Planning Commission, the industrial policy, and in a charitable gesture Singh invited

Devi Lal to send him several proposals in writing, including names he would like considered for various appointments.

. Sensing a mellowed mood, Devi Lal brought up the issue of the 'unfair treatment' of Chautala. Singh responded with generalities-that the affairs of the state should be left to MLAs. On July 9, Devi Lal summoned his aides, and told them they'd been misleading him about V.P. Singh. The Tau had interpreted Singh's dinner advice to mean that the path for Chautala's comeback, if his MLAs backed him, was clear.

But now how to remove B.D. Gupta? On July 10, Devilal spent the day closeted with Ranjit and Chautala at his Sirsa farmhouse. Later, Haryana Home Minister Sampat Singh joined them, and suggested Gupta be asked to resign. The next morning Devi Lal returned to Delhi, and asked K.K. Deepak, a staunch ally, to quit his Rajva Sabha seatin favour of Ranjit Singh. He also requested V.P. Singh to give Deepak a foreign assignment. To V.P. Singh, ignorant of the unfolding scheme, it sounded a routine request. Meantime, Gupta was summoned to Delhi. In the Tau's mind it was a neat deal: a blanket blessing from the prime minister; the chief ministership for Chautala; and a Rajya Sabha berth for Ranjit.

#### Who conspired with whom to bring back Chautala as chief minister

N July 11, Industry Minister Ajit Singh received a frantic call from Gupta informing him that he'd been directed by people close to Devi Lal to quit his office in favour of Chautala. Ajit Singh asked him to rush to Delhilot discussions. Ajit then telephoned party chief S.R. Bommal





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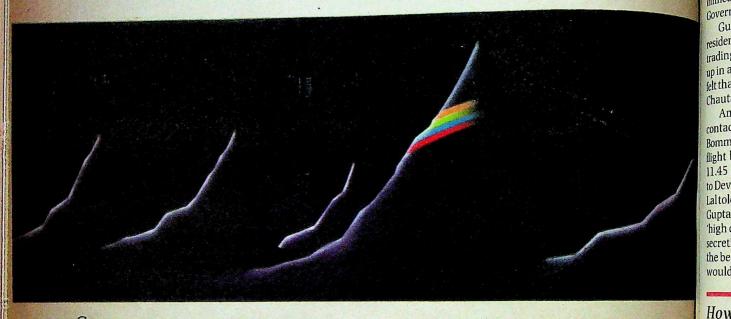


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— the dawn of a new era

about Gupta's intention to resign. Bommai responded that cupta must talk to the party president and the prime minister before doing so. And Gupta, he said, must submit his resignation to the party president and no one else.

Back in the state capital in Chandigarh Gupta's phone rang at 5 a.m. Sampat Singh was on the line. The home minister virtually ordered his chief minister to fly to Delhi mmediately. Two hours later, Gupta was on the state Government plane en route to Delhi.

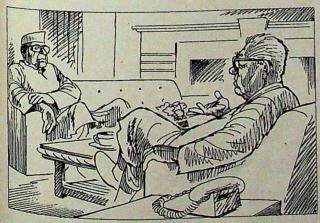
Gupta drove straight to Ajit Singh's Pandara Road residence. He was visibly upset. He warned that the entire trading community of Haryana which backed him would be up in arms. Ajit Singh advised him not to resign. But Gupta felt that given the power equations and the MLA support for chautala he had no option but to quit.

Amazingly, throughout these developments neither contacted the prime minister nor the party chief. That day, Bommai was in Karnataka Bhawan till late in the day. His flight back to Bangalore was an hour late and left only at 11.45 a.m. But instead of contacting Bommai, Gupta drove to Devi Lal's house at around 10.30 a.m. and resigned. Devi Laltold him that both he and the prime minister wanted it so. Gupta believed he was bowing to the wishes of the party high command'. And Ajit Singh, familiar with V.P. Singh's secretive ways, was chary of making too many inquiries in the belief that Singh and Devi Lal had made a quiet deal and would brook no interference.

### How was the coup in Haryana executed?

As part of the strategy, Chautala didn't return to New Delhi with his father. He stayed back so that it would look as if he was unaware of his impending appointment as the chief minister.

But he was busy fixing the numbers. He expelled three rebel MLAs who could have created problems for his reinduction. The expulsions were of dubious legality, for



according to the party constitution, a state president has no right to expel elected MLAs and MPs. Alongside, Chautala also instructed district magistrates and senior police officers to contact the remaining MLAs and send them to Delhi.

By the time Gupta resigned, more than 30 MLAs were camping at Devi Lal's house. At noon, Haryana's air taxi service was commissioned to go to Sirsa; at 3.20 p.m. Chautala was back in Delhi.

But a hitch remained. Party rules say that a new chief minister has to be elected in the presence of an

observer nominated by the party high command. Devi Lal located Sher Singh—who is neither an MP nor an MLA, and was until recently a member of the Congress(I)—and appointed him observer. Sher Singh declared Chautala unanimously elected.

### Did V.P. Singh and Arun Nehru go to war?

Was outrage within the party. But few dared to speak out. Former Jan Morchaites Arif Mohammed Khan and Satyapal Mallik had both been privately critical of the prime minister for his aloofness and refusal to take people



into confidence. They wanted to lash out, but were reluctant to act in the absence of their mentor, Arun Nehru, who was in London

Arif rang him up and urged him to return quickly as a crisis was at hand. Nehru arrived on July 13 and was immediately contacted by the PMO for an emergency meeting at the prime minister's residence.

Nehru was livid, he minced no words. His anger against the prime minister on other issues—such as V.P. Singh's over-reliance on a set of favoured bureaucrats and his vendettas against businessmen—came pouring out. He said Chautala's return would be a disaster for the party, and that the prime minister's image had received a severe battering. Nehru said Chautala must go, and left in a huff.

His mind was made up. And when he returned to his Akbar Road residence Arif, Mallik and Ajit Singh were waiting for him. Arif was in a rage. Nehru declared: "Let us resign here and now. Arif, can you draft out a letter?" Nehru then turned towards Ajit Singh and asked: "Will you sign too?" Ajit Singh suggested they postpone the decision till the next day, and give him time to consult his group members.

But Nehru was adamant. Ajit left. And Nehru started correcting the draft prepared by Arif. There was no typist present at Nehru's residence. Arif summoned his typist who came and typed the letter on an ancient Remington typewriter. Later when the Mufti came over, Nehru told him clearly that the three of them were quitting.

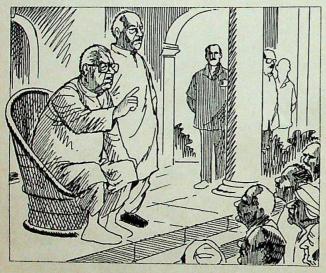
The media coverage was carefully planned. Journalists were informed and copies of the letters leaked to them.

At about 10 p.m., the Jan Morchaites were sitting round cheese-toast and coffee when the prime minister called again. Nehru told him that the three of them would be there in a few minutes. Wire agencies had already flashed their

resignations. It was an emotional get-together. When Nehru handed over his resignation, Singh said: "Agar aap yeh kar rahe hain to mein bhi yehi karoonga." (If you all are resigning, then so will I.) But Nehru advised him against doing so. Fifteen minutes later he left. The battle lines had been drawn.

### How effectively did the Jats counter-attack?

Pushed into a corner by Nehru and company, the Jats struck back. Devi Lal and Chautala worked out a counter-move: use the MLAs to pressurise the Centre. While Devi Lal and Chautala confabulated with Chandra Shekhar at his residence, Jai Prakash, MP, and one time commander-in-chief of Chautala's goon squad, the Green Brigade, began marshalling the 40-odd MLAs. Emerging from Devi Lal's residence, followed by the MLAs, Jai Prakash



aggressively declared: "We will not let Chautala resign. Let the Central Government fall, for all we care." They demanded that Nehru and Arif's resignations be accepted, as they had precipitated the crisis.

Shepherding the MLAs into waiting cars, he jumped into a Gypsy. First destination: Orissa Bhawan, to meet Biju Patnaik. It was about 8 p.m.. July 16. The Orissa chief minister was ensconced with Chandra Shekhar and Bommai when the MLAs barged in. Why should Chautala resign, they screamed, marking their protest. Next destination: 7, Race Course Road. Entry was barred to them. They sat in dharna outside and shouted: "Om Prakash Chautala zindabad."

The Tau too lumbered into action. He decided to lambast his value-based government through Arif and Nehru. In a letter dated July 15, later released to the press, he wrote: "Damaging acts of immorality and impropriety are being committed under our very nose by some of the same gentlemen who are raising the banner of revolt and declaring themselves to be the guardians of propriety and morality." He charged Nehru with having pocketed 'substantial commissions, running into several million dollars in the purchase of phosphoric acid from Morocco through an Indian agency under the name, Plisaria. Arif was accused of 'purchasing land amounting to Rs 55 lakh in a satellite city in Uttar Pradesh and of being involved with Brown Boveri Co, for the purchase of power turbines'. The gameplan was to shift the focus from Chautala to Arif and Nehru. But it didn't work. Not then.

## Who were the machiavellians within the party

HE field now opened up to all kinds of mediators. N.T. Rama Rao in vibrant saffron, the regional satraps, the lobbyists, the connivers, the wreckers, they all went into several separate huddles, making common cause out of different ambitions. Chandra Shekhar emerged from his Bhondsi farmhouse with a pious I-told-you-so expression and fervently declared: "V.P. Singh should not have resigned. He should remember that he is the prime minister."

Then he fell to machinating. His first act was to dissuade Ajit Singh and the others from resigning. Let the picture clear, he urged. Eternal hope raged in his breast: his dream mightyet be realised. He then closeted himself with Chautala, ostensibly to assure him of his support.

A marathon tete-a-tete ensued, broken briefly by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav. Chandra Shekhar told the press he failed to see what to do considering Chautala had been elected by his own legislators. In between he reportedly confabulated with the Congress(I).

Chandra Shekhar's mission seemed clear: explore the possibility of ridding the party of V.P. Singh. Enter the chief ministers: Orissa's Biju Patnaik, Uttar Pradesh's Mulayam Singh Yadav, Gujarat's Chimanbhai Patel and Bihar's Laloo Prasad Yadav. The support for V.P. Singh, by now, had begun to mount. Laloo Prasad gauged the mood accurately, and made it clear that he was with V.P. Singh and that Chautala should go.

Chimanbhai Patel was confused. He began by hobnobbing with the anti-V.P. Singh elements and briefly flirted with various face-saving formulas for Devi Lal, but eventually opted for a clear cut 'Chautala has to resign' stand. He finally returned to Gujarat with a perceptible strain in his relations with former mentor Devi Lal.

Patnaik arrived with different ambitions, and like Chandra Shekhar began to explore the possibilities of an alternative leadership. He confabed with everyone, and invoking democracy told correspondents that just about anyone could be in the running for the prime minister's chair. Pressed for a name, Patnaik said: "Well, why not Dandavate". This was basically to indicate that he was not holding a brid for anyone.

As for Mulayam Singh Yadav, he made it clear that there ought not be any compromise on Chautala, but conferred with the others in search of the acceptable formula. He shunted between Delhi and Lucknow; and though certain



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gaving realised that getting rid of V.P. Singh would paying to jettisoning the Government as his support was on increase, these several satraps began working on a promise formula. Devi Lal's house became the beehive. wographers trying to enter the house, were asked by Devi There are so many meetings going on inside, which one want to photograph?"

ed from his the first gambit that was suggested to Devi Lal was: affice Chautala but obtain the heads of Nehru, Arif and resigned. He gapal Mallik. Patnaik, Mulayam, and Chandra Shekhar gethe active proponents of this. Patnaik even approached arral leaders (including BJP stalwarts) with this proposal. Then events rapidly assumed another complexion. The wkisans Ajit Singh, and Sharad Yadav, who through the had been perceived to be in the Devi Lal-Chandra okhar camp became vocal in their support of V.P. Singh dwere categorical that there could be no compromise with PriLalon the Chautala issue. Meantime Bommai became the ediator, and began sounding out everyone, while making it har that he was nobody's man.

finally the saviours jumped into the fray. The National imt got its act going to bail out V.P. Singh. N.T. Rama Rao merged from hibernation in Andhra Pradesh to galvanise the iont. A benignly smiling Prafulla Mahanta, an incensed P. Unnikrishnan, a disturbed Dinesh Goswami, and an crutable Karunanidhi announced their unqualified supor V.P. Singh and decreed that in their opinion Singh light to withdraw his resignation.

This unequivocal support turned the tables decisively. heir message to the prime minister was clear: act firmly, and onot compromise.

#### Was V.P. Singh's resignation part Ja larger strategy?

Nthe end, for Singh there was no alternative but to resign. There was no way he could have explained the nearly daylong time lag between the reinstallation of Chautala and is reaction. There was no way V.P. Singh could have nggled out of the damning fact that he had been paralysed by he Chautala challenge, and had reacted only when forced to o so by the public outcry.

hevitably criticism followed. On the very day of Chautala's swearing-in he was grilled badly by his allies at the weekly dinner meeting. Both the Left and the Bjr told him in no uncertain terms that they would find it difficult to support him on this issue. V.P. Singh immediately contacted Bommai in Hospet, and asked him to return.

Next day the newspapers carried highly caustic reports, and Singh, who has always been supported by the media, saw his scrupulously constructed edifice beginning to collapse. He lold his senior officials that day that his image had received a scrious setback. What however worried him more was the lotal siles. total silence on the part of the senior party leaders and the chief ministers. He found himself alone in this hour of crisis.

The breaking point came when his three trusted coltagues quit the Cabinet in protest. Suddenly, he had no moral bigh grounds to stand on. He decided to throw in the towel. But he was afraid of opening the door for the Congress(I) to walk in any afraid of opening the door for the National Walk in and take over. He decided to involve all the National Front members. Next morning, he called Bommai and handed

over his resignation. He also called up the National Front chairman and told him about his decision.

Bommai was caught totally off guard. He told him that he could not resign without consulting the party. But the gauntlet Singh had thrown had fetched a favourable reaction. While his adversaries plotted to elect a new leader, the young MPs and allies rushed towards the prime minister's residence and urged him to withdraw his resignation.

#### Who finally saved the prime minister's skin?

T this juncture the BJP entered the arena, and made it clear that it remained committed to the V.P. Singh Government. At the same time the West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu, visiting Germany, called up V.P. Singh from Munich, and exhorted him to refrain from doing



anything further until he returned.

Basu took the next flight back to Delhi, and played perhaps the most vital role in resolving the crisis. He used his excellent relations with all the factions to liaise, but made it absolutely clear that his party was firmly behind Singh, and that he should act firmly on the Chautala issue, without entertaining trade-off proposals. That firmly put paid to the Nehru-Arif-Mallik for Chautala formula.

Subsequently CP1 leaders Indrajit Gupta and M. Farooqi also called upon Singh, and reiterated their support for him. They drove home the point that Singh was not the prime minister of a party but of the country, and he could not resign without taking all his supporters into confidence.

Meantime Advani who had left for Bihar spoke to Singh on the phone and repeated the Left's assertions. Soon afterwards he returned from Hazaribagh by a BSF plane. Chautala's supporters, including Hukam Singh, arrived at his residence to elicit his support. They tried to get him to agree that the ministers who had resigned should go along with Chautala. Advanitold them: "I am not willing to link Chautala with their resignation. I am not going to mediate in this matter.'

With support from the National Front, the Left and the BJP clearly established, Singh emerged in the clear, while Devi Lal stood isolated. Singh withdrew his resignation, refused to negotiate with the Devi Lal camp on Chautala's ouster. It was made clear that if Devi Lal resisted, he would be acted against. The firmness paid off, earning Singh some credit. Chautala went. The ministers stayed on. The crisis was defused.

--- PRABHU CHAWLA, SEEMA MUSTAFA, H. BAWEJA & BHASKAR ROY

VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH

## "I have to be more firm"

THE afternoon before his departure for Moscow, Prime Minister V.P. Singh, sitting in his living-room at 7, Race Course Road, dressed casually in a kurta pyjama, seemed very relaxed. He displayed no hangover from the recent hectic events. He rivals his predecessor in looking cool and unconcerned in times of crisis. But that's where the similarity ends, as Singh during an interview ducks, weaves and dances round the ring like Muhammad Ali, making sure no punch lands on him. Rajiv was matter of fact, less preachy, more frank, spontaneous and eager to explain, which frequently got him into trouble. Singh treats every question with suspicion, and carefully examines it for hidden meanings and traps. If asked a direct inconvenient question, he invariably takes refuge in abstractions and waxes on the metaphysics of politics. But despite these academic flights, his sense of humour doesn't desert him. When told that he was side-stepping questions, he joked: "I have to live up to the title of artful dodger your magazine has given me."

He explains the recent crisis in the context of the peculiar circumstances that gave birth to the Janata Dal and the coming to power of the National Front, confounding all critics. The eruptions he sees as minor mishaps in the path of a maturing democracy. In spite of his clever evasions, the interview clearly established that Singh was far from demoralised. In fact, it seemed he had realised the need for change in his personal style of management. Also, he showed no signs of a desire to jettison the deputy prime minister. The prime minister was interviewed by Editor Aroon Purie.

Q. L.K. Advani has asked his party to prepare for a midterm poll. Is it because your government's stability has been questioned due to the recent crisis?

A. Mr Advani is free to gear his party for election. He has his own perception about politics.

Q. Are you sure that the Janata Dal will continue in its present form after the serious personality and ideological contradictions in it have been exposed?

A. The party will remain a political identity. There may be some process of political understanding amongst ourselves and other components.

Q. Do you agree that the latest crisis has dealt a serious blow to the party and the Government?

A. Yes. It has affected everyone in the party. Q. It has also affected your personal image.

A. I don't measure my own image every morning. It is for others to do this.

Q. If that was the case then why did you resign a day later? Couldn't you have dealt with the crisis without resigning?

A. I am not the prime minister because of numbers. I am there because of the trust reposed in me by the Janata Dal, friendly parties and others. And if serious questions about my leadership arise in the minds of the people then I am answerable to them. Whatever others might say, the buck stops at my desk. I have to take the responsibility. Am I the prime minister because I represent the largest group in the Janata Dal? No. I have no group of my own.

Q. Whatmade you feel you had lost the trust of the people?

A. No one asked Ram to put Sita to the test of fire. It was just a public perception. But Ram did it because this was one way of sending a political message. It was a style of communicating with the people. The office you hold is like a currency. Its value has to be backed by the trust of gold you have in the treasury. If you don't have enough gold, it leads to political inflation.

Q. It still does not explain why you delayed your resignation for over 24 hours after you knew of Chautala's re-installation?

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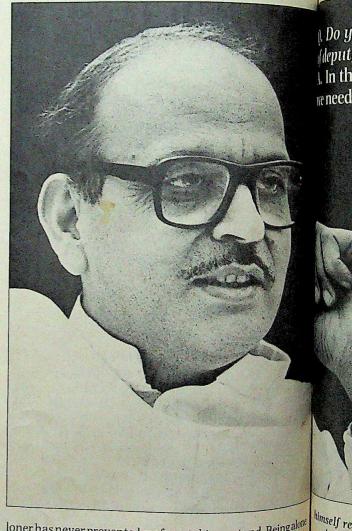
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A. What do you think I am—a light bulb with an on-of switch which can be instantly activated?

Q.Did the fact that you have no group of your own weaken your handling of the current situation?

A. I have never felt alone in my political life. And being



loner has never prevented me from taking a stand. Being alore doesn't give me jitters. In fact, when you belong to the whole how can you be a part?

Q. Has this crisis reinforced your own leadership? A. I never talk in terms of personal leadership. It is collective leadership which has emerged stronger.

Q. It was also quite clear that the chief ministers will playing a powerful role in influencing politics at the Central

A. We have genuinely elected chief ministers, not impos them from the Centre. They have been important player the formation of the Janata Dal and the Government. views are important and can't be ignored.

Q. But the latest crisis proves that your government of any day because fall any day because of internal dissensions?

A. So far as expression of opinion is concerned, we should

treryone to speak out before a decision is taken. Because essence of democracy. Even if it looks contentious, it whe permitted. In the Congress(I) it was not permitted so that become stronger. So-called norms of discipline and pledges of loyalty to the leader didn't make the party any I respect dissent. It is absolutely necessary the people from the mental cage which holds that at is indiscipline. When opinions are suppressed the ndsbecome deeper, instead of healing. Free discussion is a bealing process.

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OBut where does democracy end and indiscipline begin? Indiscipline begins when people try to violate a tive decision of the party.

0. Chautala did violate the party's directive by getting

LDo you really need the post (deputy prime minister? In the present political situation, meneed that post.

himself re-installed. Wasn't it an act of indiscipline?

A. But then the party did get activated and resolved the cisis, and Chautala accepted the decision of the party. The Party felt that its earlier decision of asking him to quit the chief mistership should be reiterated.

Q. Do you think he was the only person responsible for olating party discipline?

A. After all, I took the responsibility for whatever happened.

Q. But have you dealt with the root cause of the trouble?

A. We have understood the cause. We have to work out an the delibertanian and the cause. We have to work the cause we have the cau heed better interaction to communicate with each other more

Q.Are there some unfinished tasks in relation to the crisis?

A. The political process is always unfinished.

Q. Haven't you just dealt with the symptoms rather than the disease with your patchwork solution?

A. You are conditioned by the Congress culture. We are a one-year-old party unlike the 100-year-old Congress. They have over the years worked out a proper mechanism for handling conflicts.

Q. Do you really need the post of deputy prime minister?

A. In the present political situation, we need that post.

Q. Are you under any political debt to the deputy prime

A. I am under debt to every political leader and worker of the Janata Dal.

Q. Can your government survive without Devi Lal?

A. It is a hypothetical question. He himself has made it clear that he will keep the party together and united.

Q. Will you allow Chautala to take over as the chief minister if he wins from Meham again?

A. It is for the party and the state MLAs to decide whom they want as the chief minister.

Q. If Chautala was found unfit to be the chief minister, why has he been permitted to continue as general secretary of the Janata Dal?

A. He was appointed general secretary of the party when he was not the chief minister.

Q. But what about the judicial probe into the Meham violence?

A. It has been delayed because the chief justice of India expressed his inability to spare a sitting judge of the Supreme Court. He has suggested a retired judge now. We will soon take a decision on this issue.

Q. In the current political scenario, are you free to sack any minister or induct anyone of your choice or are you bound by the factional loyalties of the MPs and others?

A. I don't find any reason to sack anyone at the moment.

O. Suppose the question arose.

A. If such a situation arose I would not even wait for someone to ask this question.

Q. Do you foresee the possibility of a major political surgery in future?

A. I don't see that situation arising. But if it does, the whole party has been geared to react more decisively.

Q. How are you going to resolve the issue regarding the letter written by Devi Lal about Arun Nehru and Arif Mohammed Khan?

A. I have to take a decision on this. I have written to the deputy prime minister and I am awaiting his reply. This is a matter which cannot be negotiated.

Q. Has this crisis made you change your style of functioning?

A. Yes. I have learnt a lesson. I think I have to be more firm.

Q. That means you were weak before. A. Maybe I was too quiet and tolerant.

Q. But will you complete your tenure?

A. It is not a question of tenure. As long as we are able to implement our election promises, we will remain in power. The moment we realise that the mandate of the people is being frustrated we will not compromise by remaining in power. If we can't carry the task given to us within the Government we will carry it outside the Government.

Q. Does that mean you aren't sure of completing your five-year term?

A. I didn't mean that. We may have more than five years if we don't betray the mandate of the people.

Q. With you as the prime minister?

A. I have never put myself first.

**HUKAM SINGH** 

## His Master's Voice

The curtain is yet to be rung down on the pantomime in Haryana. Om Prakash Chautala may be out as chief minister; but his order continues. For the new chief minister. Hukam Singh, is merely a puppet, fully aware that he owes his all to Chautala.

He knows to fall out of line with his benefactor would be to suffer the fate of his predecessor Banarasi Das Gupta, whose exit was hastened by his growing independence. Chautala is bound to soon make another bid for the throne; the question is how and when.

UKAM Singh, 64, the new chief minister of Haryana, is truly what he calls himself: less than a dummy. He takes his daily briefings from former chief minister Om Prakash Chautala, waits on him, opens the car door for him, even hesitates to walk in step with him. His name might be 'Hukam' (order), but it's Chautala's word which is law.

It's as if Chautala were still the chief minister, HNG 23 might be the chief minister's official car, but Chautala still rides in it; when in Delhi, Hukam goes where Chautala takes him. Chautala continues to fly in the state plane, as he did on July 20, when he went to Chandigarh for the ministry's expansion, accompanied by Hukam who came to his house to pick him up. Hukam calls on Chautala, not the other way round.

Chautala may have lost the chief ministership, but not the power. Before the ministry's expansion he was flooded with calls from legislators pleading they be made ministers. And the state's bureaucrats and IPS officers still obey his commands. After he resigned, Chautala wanted a successor who'd never question his authority. And Hukam Singh fit the bill.

A farmer-turned-trade unionist, Hukam wields little political power outside his own assembly constituency, Charkhi Dadri in Bhiwani district. He's been elected from the same seat thrice and was content to be a minister under Devi Lal. Then suddenly, thanks to Chautala and Meham, he found

"Sab susron neh apne bhai, bhanje aur bhatije laga rakhe hein. Mere toh ek hi beta post peh tha, us ko bhi nikal diya" (Everyone has his relatives in important posts. I had just one son in a post but he too has been removed.) -DEVI LAL

Om Prakash Chautala often regales pressmen with his humour. When photographers requested him to sit next to Hukum Singh, he quipped: "Kursi toh aap neh chheen li, ab baitha rahe hoh" (You are asking me to sit down after taking away my chair.)



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aself catapulted to the forefront of Haryana politics and by the national scene. "Hukam must be really indebted he Devi Lal family. Even in his dreams, he must never have od to become the chief minister." says a senior bureaucrat. flukam Singh was first a contender for the chief minister's after Chautala's resignation following the murder independent candidate in Meham. Then, the Tau setfor Gupta hoping he'd rid himself of the pro-Jat tag the charge that he was perpetuating family rule. Where Lal and Chautala erred was in their presumption Gupta would be willing to be a puppet.

in a bid to assert his thority, Gupta transred K.S. Tomar, the iwani police chief and autala's most trusted liceman. Tomar, who'd en seen in a controverlight after the death of priya, Chautala's dauher-in-law, also figured ls little the Meham controsy; it was in the area om the der his jurisdiction that ler Devi body of the indepenat candidate, Amir Singh,

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as found. What also anred Chautala was Gupta's xision to transfer Budh igh, IG (CID), whose role in leham is suspect.

Apart from this, Gupta so tried to consolidate his wn base in the state. Simulneously, he made moves med at getting close to the P. which had not only toly dissociated itself from 'corrupt, pro-Jat' hautala government, but so advocated a soft line torards the legislators who apported Ranjit Singh, hautala's younger brother. the axe finally came when upta started holding secret neetings with these MLAs.

Gupta's hasty exit seems have etched an indelible mpression on Hukam Singh. he makes no bones about eing a dummy and of Devi aland Chautala being super chief ministers. "I will funcion according to Chautala's orders," he says. If his actions ofar are any indication, the ho Hukum' chief minister is unlikely to repeat the mistakes' that Gupta made. But the backing of Devi and Chautala isn't the thing Hukam has to

about. The pro-Ranjit

MAs proved Gupta's undo-

ing, but the ones that are left

could bring about Hukam's downfall. For the Haryana legislators have assumed special importance, after the three days when they held the Central Government to ransom, by refusing to let Chautala resign. All of them now expect to be rewarded for their loyalty. Nor have they been disappointed; 27 of the Janata Dal's 49 MLAs have been made ministers.

The support of the legislators is crucial to Hukam Singh and Chautala. Of the party's 49 legislators, 45 are said to be supporters of Chautala. In the current Assembly, which has a strength of 87. Chautala needs 44 supporters if the Government is to stay in power. The BJP with 17 members is hardly likely to lend support. The Janata Dal legislators realise this and are demanding their pound of flesh.

Murmurs of dissent, in fact, came to the fore soon after

Chautala resigned and the search for a new chief minister began. While the politically adept Sampat Singh staked claims to the chair, senior legislator Hiranand Arya suggested that there be a secret ballot.

Dissent, however, is not Chautala's only worry. Or Devi Lal's. More importantly, they have to work out a stratwhereby Chautala emerges on top once again. And Chautala cannot make a come-back unless he is cleared on Meham.

Chautala has only three options. To go through an inquiry by a sitting judge of the Supreme Court, wait for the verdict of the CBI inquiry, or contest an election in Meham. And the choice isn't easy. The Supreme Court judge's report could entail an eternal wait since the chief justice is still to appoint a sitting judge for the inquiry. The cot inquiry's fate too isn't known, with the state Government opposed to it. So, Chautala's best option could be to contest an election in Meham likely to be held in September. But winning it is a near impossible task.

In the fight with their antagonists at the Centre, Chautala and Devi Lal are likely to insist on pushing through the infamous Disnevland project that has already been a great source of embarrassment. Whatever the game plan father and son might be chalking out, one thing is certain. Both Haryana and Chautala are going to figure in the national headlines many more times.

-HARINDER BAWEJA



DEVI LAL "What's wrong with Chautala becoming Chief Minister?"

DEVI Lal spoke to Senior Correspondent HARINDER BAWEIA after Om Prakash Chautala resigned. Excerpts:

Q. How will the crisis affect the Government?

A. There was no crisis as far as I'm concerned. Why don't you ask Arun Nehru?

Q. But Chautala's return caused the crisis.

A. What was wrong with Chautala becoming chief minister? He proved himself by winning from Darba Kalan. Do the MLAs decide on their leader or does anybody else?

Q. The party had sought Chautala's resignation over the Meham issue.

A. What happened in Meham? Amir Singh's brother has blamed Dangi. There's no FIR against Chautala. Should he be hanged because of the press?

Q. Was V.P. Singh aware of Chautala's return?

A. After hearing the radio news, 20,000 people came from Haryana for the swearing-in ceremony. Don't people in Delhi listen to the radio?

Q. Why did B.D. Gupta give his resignation to you, not to Bommai or to V.P. Singh?

A. Ho sakta hai Tau ki haisiyat se de diya ho (He may have given it to me in deference to my being the Tau).

Q. Shouldn't you have brought up the charges against Khan and Nehru in the party forum?

A. They resigned openly. They threw the whole nation into confusion without any reason. Action should be taken against them and that darhiwala (bearded) minister, what's his name... Gujral. Why did he resign after V.P. Singh withdrew his resignation?

Q. How does it feel to have the entire cabinet

A. Of the 12 ministers who resigned, 10 are urban. I am interested in the kisans. Is it the Cabinet that made me what I am or the people?

Q. You're expected to strike back.

A. Do I have a lathi in my hand that I will hit somebody? I'm the one who's made this government. How can I destroy it?

CONGRESS(I)

## A Dismal Silence

EVEN as the infighting in the Janata Dal brought the National Front Government to the very edge of chaos, the Congress(I), the largest opposition party, failed to react. Instead the party, directionless and uncoordinated, groped to build bridges with Chandra Shekhar and Devi Lal, in the desperate hope that one of them would ultimately shatter the Front's unity and thus pave the way for Rajiv Gandhi's return.

OR any opposition party the rumblings of dissent within the ruling party herald the right time to move political pawns and reach for a checkmate. But ever since the dissident bandwagon of rebellion within the Janata Dal started moving from a dusty backyard of Haryana called Meham and transformed into a juggernaut that almost brought down the National Front Government, the Congress(I) has remained strangely silent.

It seems as if there were no opposition party. Rajiv Gandhi and the Congress(I), it has been all too obvious, was quite happy to watch from the sidelines as the leaders of the Janata Dal fought a bizarre battle that threatened to rip apart their tapestry of unity. The first comment that Rajiv Gandhi made on the explosive situation was a tame one: "It is an internal matter." And in his opening address during the three-day session of the All India Congress Committee in Delhi he did not even mention the crisis, confining himself mostly to the question of organisational elections.

When the party could have been throbbing with excitement at the prospect of destroying the ruling party, it was trapped in listless lethargy. The day Prime Minister V.P. Singh resigned, the Congress(I) headquarters was deserted. Activity at 10, Janpath showed no change. The coterie was

in command—R.K.Dhawan who is the ring leader these days, M.J. Akbar, P. Chidambaram with M.L. Fotedar and Ghulam Nabi Azad putting in brief appearances. Akbar, surprised at the large turnout at his daily briefing said he had to go back to Rajiv Gandhi to "get permission" about what he should say and returned to say nothing of substance.

The party's sudden belief that in politics silence is golden, has surprised party members. Rajiv Gandhi's tame statement from Hyderabad was explained away by a party leader thus: "Well, he was alone and probably was not sure of what he should say." The continuing silence has perplexed Congressmen who feel that the party should have expressed strong views on the rebellion within the Janata Dal. It was left to younger leaders like Tariq Anwar from Bihar to say a few bitter words, and declare that Devi Lal had made a joke of Indian democracy. Said he: "This is not an internal matter, it is a very serious matter and every political party should oppose this imposition of dynastic rule."

Beneath this facade of silence, the party made vague attempts at forging links with the leading dissidents in the Janata Dal like Chandra Shekhar. Akbar confirmed at a briefing that he had had a long tete-a-tete with Chandra Shekhar till well past midnight, a few days before the crisis

broke. Dhawan had also been invited for this dinner party at Chandra Shekhar's residence, but had left early.

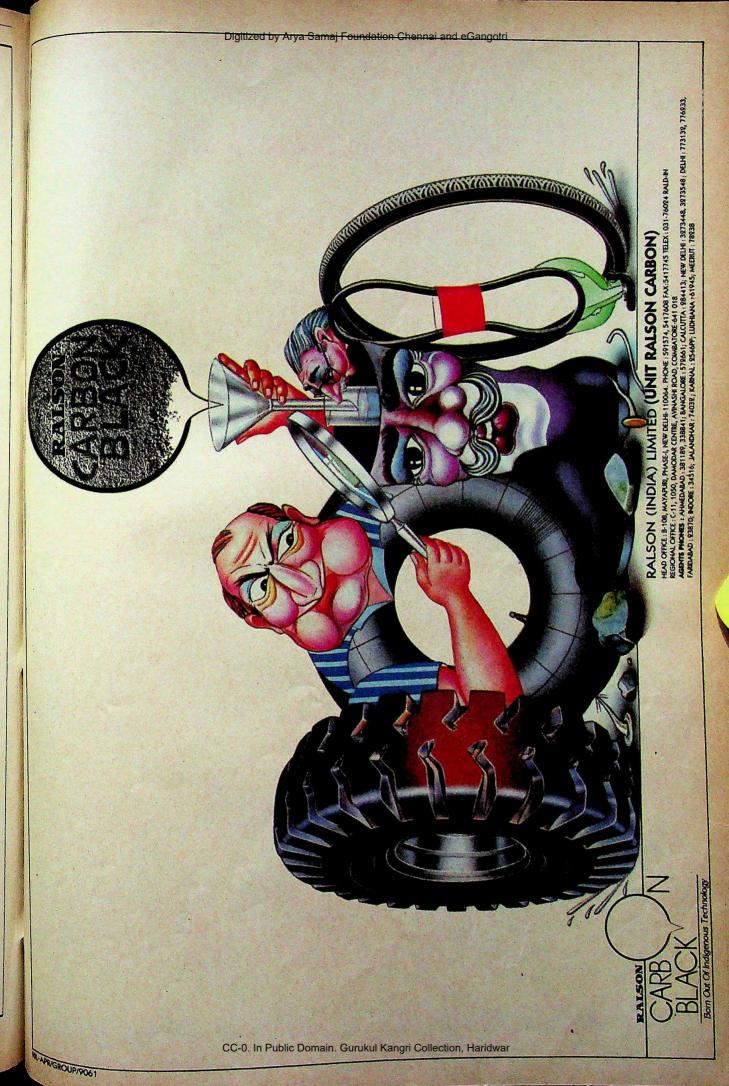
Much before the party tried building bridges with Chandra Shekhar, Rajiv





Chidambaram with Rajiv at a meeting; (above) Dhawan

The day Prime Minister V.P. Singh resigned, the Congress(I) headquarters was deserted. The coterie was in command at Rajiv's residence. There was R.K. Dhawan who is the ring leader these days, P. Chidambaram, M.L. Fotedar, M.J. Akbar and Ghulam Nabi Azad.



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#### BREAKING BARRIERS IN SOUND

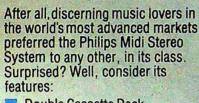
# PRESENTING THE PHILIPS MIDI STEREO SYSTEM. COULD MILLIONS OF MUSIC LOVERS, THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, BE WRONG?



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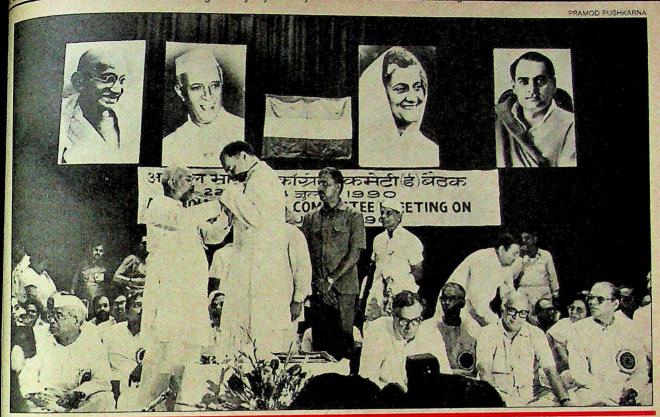
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Rajiv Gandhi and his party was happy watching from the sidelines. And even during his opening address at the three-day AICC(I) meet, he made no mention of the crisis which almost brought down the National Front Government, but confined himself to organisational elections.

Gandhi had already made a rather blatant and crude political pass at Devi Lal. When an all-party delegation visited Kashmir Rajiv brought up needless questions of protocol with the then governor Jagmohan. He then thumped the table to find out why Devi Lal had not been given due importance in the seating arrangement, saying: "I want an answer, after all he is my deputy prime minister." All that a gratified Devi Lal could do was produce an inaudible murmur.

That was the beginning of what seemed to be a tough attempt at courtship. On Meham too Rajiv Gandhi refused to take a stand, despite considerable pressure from other leaders. Eventually, after the murder of the independent candidate Amir Singh just before the Meham repoll he had to go there. And at the meeting in Medina he did not utter one word against Devi Lal or Chautala.

Rajiv Gandhi has done nothing to keep the party together, nothing to instil a new hope in the demoralised cadre, nothing to show that he has picked up a few nuggets of political wisdom from the debris of defeat. All that he has done is resort to gimmickry like he was so fond of doing during his prime ministership. He went on a fast at the Rajghat for instance. The day-long sit-in at the Mahatma's samadhi perhaps reminded him of some of Gandhiji's journeys. And so he also travelled by second class compartment to remind the people that he is still around.

But that he hasn't managed to journey into the collective consciousness of the country is obvious. Rajiv Gandhi is still licking the ghastly wounds of his fall from glorious heights and is not ready to even think in terms of becoming prime minister. His party is in shambles. There is considerable resentment, which has found expression in the setting up of

dissident groupings like the Forum for Action, against which the leadership has not been able to initiate any action. As CPI leader Indrajit Gupta says sarcastically: "Well, perhaps the man is not ready yet, he is probably quite relieved being out of power."

O wonder the party has just been making half-hearted attempts at drawing the blueprint for an alternative government. Their hopes are pinned on Devi Lal and Chandra Shekhar. At one stage they had even offered the prime ministership to Chandra Shekhar as a bait for breaking the Janata Dal. The coterie gathered at 10, Janpath figured out that around 40 MPs were with Chandra Shekhar and Devi Lal.

Moreover, Rajiv Gandhi and Chandra Shekhar both realised that not a single MP would be willing to cross over from the Janata Dal over the Chautala issue. The strong support expressed for V.P. Singh by all the supporting parties made it amply clear that any move to split the party at this stage would have been extremely immature. There were, to put it in simple terms, no buyers.

Rajiv Gandhi does not want elections. He is not prepared for a mid-term poll. He is also aware that the country's honeymoon with V.P. Singh is still not over. But he would not mind an interim prime minister (Chandra Shekhar perhaps, or why not Devi Lal) to keep the seat warm for him while he creates the atmosphere for a thumping return.

Rajiv Gandhi has forgotten the tears of the women he consoled at Meham, for Chautala will not be a issue for the Congress(I) as long as Devi Lal remains useful. In him the Congress(I) sees Charan Singh. And Rajiv is content to wait for history to repeat itself.

—SEEMA MUSTAFA

NATIONAL FRONT

# And now, how about some governance

MRS Indira Gandhi offered 'a government that works', Rajiv promised one that worked faster. Eight months and two major politico-cardial infarctions later, the V.P. Singh Government could be dubbed as one that barely manages to stay in place.

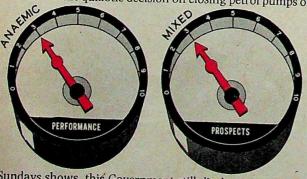
Now that the dust has settled on yet another crisis and the Government hobbles back to its main task of governance, people are increasingly asking the same question: will the Government continue to merely survive from crisis to crisis or will it be able to apply its mind to serious national problems? Some of the major promises made in the election manifesto—autonomy to the electronic media, new newsprint policy and rewriting of the Official Secrets Act—have already fallen by the wayside. Here is an assessment of the Government's performance on six major issues:

#### **ECONOMY**

Inflation, confused policy cloud new direction

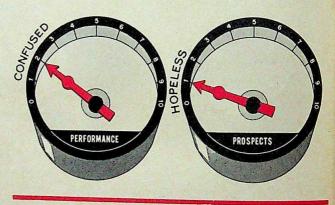
NFLATION is running at 10.1 per cent. The wholesale price index has soared from 167.9 on February 17 to 177.5 on June 30. Money supply in the economy has gone up from Rs 2,21,832 crore on February 2 to Rs 2,38,092 crore on June 15. A tin of vanaspati has gone up from Rs 377 in August 1989 to Rs 520 now.

Despite all the brouhaha about shutting unproductive ventures and foreign offices, the total saving won't be more than Rs 200 crore, peanuts compared to the overall deficit which may touch the Rs 10,000-crore mark. Less than Rajiv Gandhi's Rs 14,000 crore. Unaffordable nevertheless. The Government has no will to cut subsidies: the farm sector is only being pampered further given Devi Lal's presence in the Cabinet. As the quixotic decision on closing petrol pumps on



Sundays shows, this Government still displays more confusion than firmness.

The new industrial policy is a continuation of the liberalisation process started by the previous government. But even in opening up the economy, the Government is treading much too cautiously. For example, there is an invitation to foreign equity but only in certain industries. Which industries, the Government is still too busy doing other things to decide. It promises to contain inflation by December, clear the cobwebs on industrial policy and introduce more economy measures. But to make any substantial gains it will need to display clearer thinking.



#### PUNJAB

One step forward, but two backwards

O government could have asked for a better beginning on an issue as contentious as Punjab. And yet it would require special talent to undo all the initial gains as this government has done. Rajiv Gandhi's departure itself had opened up new possibilities of rapprochement. Then V.P. Singh made his historic, open-jeep, no-flak-jacket odyssey to Amritsar. There was also the great hope in S.S. Mann.

Today, after changing two governors, the Government is back to square one. Killings have reached unprecedented levels. Mann is openly talking the language of militancy. By opting for a policy of "peace before poll", new Governor Virendra Verma is getting closer to neither. The Government's chance was to take a bold initiative in the very beginning. But now it has pushed itself into a corner where it has no option but to perpetuate the old Congress(I) policy.

#### KASHMIR

Contrary pulls mean a dangerous drift

HE Government was caught off-balance as militants kidnapped Mufti Mohammed Sayeed's daughter. If appointing Sayeed as home minister was the original sin, easy capitulation before his daughter's kidnappers only compounded it. And the militants' "victory" converted a

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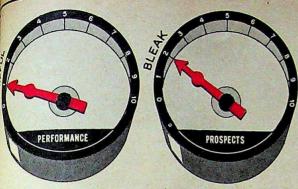
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ent mass movement into a euphoric one.

Smarting, the Government changed tack, and appointed a ugh governor in Jagmohan. On his heels, however, it sent in corge Fernandes, the dove, sending the most ridiculously ixed signals. Finally, it changed horses in midstream as gmohan was unceremoniously replaced by G.C. Saxena. Kashmir is a classic instance of the kind of pulls and unter-pulls the Government has had to work under. Within 2 Janata Dal, opinion on how Kashmir should be handled ries from one extreme to the other. While the BJP wants all 2 stops pulled out in dealing with the militants, the left critics want the Government to take things easy. There was a mor flirtation with Farooq Abdullah, but the policy has now en left to the Mufti who is a discredited politician even within 2 valley. The result is a dangerous drift.

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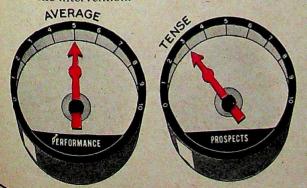
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bying time, but no long-term solution

IN the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid controversy, the Government inherited a dangerous legacy of communalism. It hoped that since the BJP supported the ruling alition, it would go out of its way not to rock the boat. In the ginning, V.P. Singh's quiet diplomacy worked with the VHP at he was able to at least put off the showdown.

But this is as far as he can proceed without taking the bull the horns. In June, he bought time from the VHP by pointing the threat along the borders. Now Hindu fundamentalists their October 30 deadline for the temple's construction he deferred only in case of a war with Pakistan. Singh's asic fault was that instead of saying a firm no to the VHP on the sound that it would lead to communal tension. he sought fuge in war-phobia.

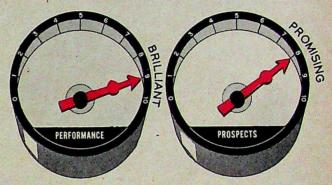
At present, he faces a situation where the VHP is spoiling for showdown. The Muslims too are gearing up. To make atters worse, he has only limited control over Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav who is following his wintough strategy. The VHP will launchits fresh campaign on August 1. And unless a game-plan is devised nothing will help target divine intervention.



#### **FOREIGN POLICY**

Quick thinking, flexibility bring rewards

PY taking foreign policy out of the PMO and putting it where it belongs—in the External Affairs Ministry—the Government took a positive step. It also appointed a foreign minister with savvy and the gift of quick thinking. It has done a more than adequate job of countering the



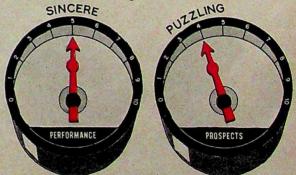
Pakistani campaign in the Islamic world on Kashmir and in exploiting US concerns about a war in the subcontinent. Relations with the neighbours have improved across the board, topped by the restoration of old ties with Nepal. The reduction of tensions with China has been substantial.

Besides the neighbourhood, the Government has met the challenge of living in the brave new post-perestroika, post-Wall world. But as tensions in Kashmir and Punjab increase and relations with Pakistan are strained further, much more will be demanded of its diplomatic talents.

#### **BOFORS**

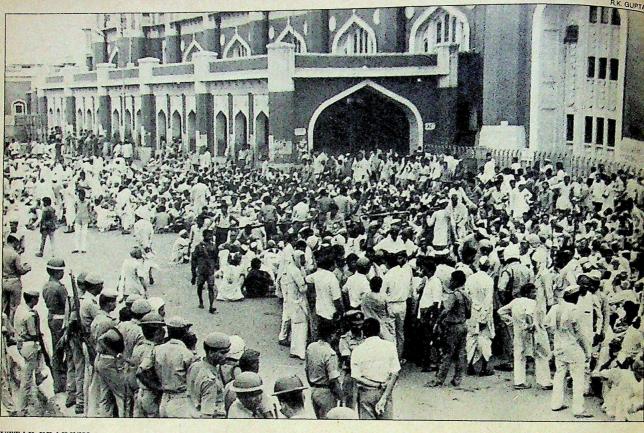
Serious effort but pedestrian progress

Popular of the National Front got to rule the country. The main plank against Rajiv Gandhi's Congress(I) was its alleged role in the Bofors scandal and V.P. Singh had often said that to find out



who collected the kickbacks was a "bounden duty to the nation". Immediately on taking over, the Government assigned its most trusted people to find out who took the Bofors money and the evidence to prosecute them. This Government achieved more in three months than Rajiv Gandhi's had done in almost three years. But there were too many people doing the same thing, often leading to crossed wires. In addition, a Swiss court rejected the Indian letter-rogatory. Now a new one has been sent and the Government says it is ironing out the problems, but it is uncertain whether the "names" will be revealed.

—SHEKHAR GUPTA with bureau reports



UTTAR PRADESH

## The Siege Within

### Janata Dal MLAs protest Yadav's strongman tactics



THE assault on the Uttar Pradesh citadel of Mulayam Singh Yadav has been on for some time now. However neither the gress(I)'s invective, nor

the BJP's growing criticism were capable of breaching the walls. But last fortnight, Yadav faced a siege within, as Janata Dal MLAs revolted when he cracked down on a proposed meeting of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU).

Basking in the afterglow of the hurrahs he received for daring to arrest the Shankaracharya of Dwarka who had set out on a march to Ayodhya, Yadav in a surge of confidence decided to use the same medicine for an entirely different problem. When Mahendra Singh Tikait, the popular leader of the BKU was leading nearly 20,000 farmers to Lucknow for a panchayat on July 15, the state Government came down on them heavily, leading to many arrests. Said a Janata Dal MLA: "He thought it all would be as easy as arresting the Shankaracharya. Tikait proved a different proposition.'

The arrests not only aggravated the problem they also created a revolt within the party. It was instigated by the Ajit Singh faction, and backed by almost all



Yadav: courting trouble

#### BKU demonstration in Lucknow

of the 66 MLAs belonging to western Uttar Pradesh. Said one of the protesting legislators: "We cannot think of surviving in western Uttar Pradesh without Tikait's support."

With mounting pressure there was no way other than to release Tikaitwho immediately rushed to Delhi to meet Devi Lal. The problems for Yadav have only begun. A few members of Parliament have also joined the revolt by backing the memorandum. And in an effort to counter the threat to Yadav posed by the Jat legislators, more than 50 backward class MLAs have come out in support of the beleaguered chief minister exposing a widening wedge in the state unit. Most of the Jat MLAs and MLCs from the western districts were missing from the dinner hosted on July 20 by the chief minister.

Even if Yadav survives the revolt within the party, he will probably have to face a sustained agitation from Tikait who might seek revenge for the death of two farmers and arrest of over 20,000 during the seven-day agitation. He has announced that the next panchayat will be in Etawah, Yadav's home district.

The situation is all the more ironic since the chief minister himself would acknowledge the crucial role that Tikait played in putting the Janata Dal in power. Now that the BKU leader, who

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imself ar nested. A Mhave t 8 the Go yond th elped pla ds agitations with admirable pathe, has realised how much power he ds in the state, it might be nearly possible to stymie the kisan gernaut.

yadav was in Delhi trying to sort out crippling crisis in the National Front vernment when the revolt broke out Lucknow. But once in Lucknow, day showed that he had no clues out solving his own problems and stead compounded them. To avoid the parrassment of a possible defeat in Assembly, the Government arbirily pushed through on July 17 the pplementary demands of 23 departents and the appropriation bill withut announcing the day's agenda or n placing it before the business adviwy committee. When the Parliameny Affairs Minister Beni Prasad Verma moving the resolution for passing appropriation bill, Congress(I)'s run Kumar Singh and even one Janata allegislator Rizwan-ul-Haq demanded division. The Speaker ignored the mand and the House was adjourned. The result was that even the CPI and he Congress(I) were up in arms. "It was

in the first time that the ruling party sembers created a din to get the budget assed," said CPI legislator Ram handra Bux Singh. And on July 18, 60 ingress(I) MLAs marched from the buncil House to the Raj Bhawan to ubmit a memorandum seeking dissolution of the Assembly.

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The BJP in its memorandum delanded the summoning of the Assemby so that "the passing of the budget ould be done constitutionally." The BJP ader in the House Kalyan Singh anland withdrawn support to the Government "which as surpassed the Congress(I) regime in acconstitutional practices."

Amidst this chaos the chief minister fied all he could to pacify the agitated sislators. Initially they even refused to lake to him. Yadav later said: "Some of legislators were only expressing sentment. There is nothing serious." The fate of the ministry now depends Tikait and if Yadav does not go lovelling to him the crisis will be recipitated. Says a prominent MLA: "If

The momentum that Yadav set for inself and his government has been inself. And from now on all his efforts the Government from being pushed byond the precipice by the man who being place it in power.

—DILIP AWASTHI

ANDHRA PRADESH

### Back to Work

#### Reddy gets down to business



A kidney transplant and an intra-ocular lens implant are painful operations. But for Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister M. Chenna Reddy, they must have

seemed a small price to pay for a 59-day stay in the US, away from dissidents and the nitty-gritty of governing his state. Back in New Delhi last fortnight after his medical treatment, he was preparing to get down to the task of "political surgery" that he'd spoken about earlier: shuffling his ministers and making

errant party members fall in line.

His task has been made a little easier by Congress(I) President Rajiv Gandhi. During his recent four-day visit to the cyclone-ravaged areas of Andhra Pradesh, Rajiv made it clear that he disapproved of dissident activity. "We will take serious action if it is felt that dissidents were going beyond a point," he warned. He also stated categorically that there was no question of changing the chief minister.

Party members who went to the airport with a litany of complaints got short shrift. For instance, state Youth Congress(I) President P. Sudhir Kumar and Secunderabad MLA Mary Ravindranath were told to get on with party work instead of carrying on about their grouses.

Earlier too, the party high command had acted in support of Chenna Reddy when it got Agriculture Minister N. Janardhan Reddy to visit the chief minister in New York. Janardhan Reddy had been in the race for the chief ministership after the assembly elections before he was persuaded to withdraw.

Some of the other dissidents too seem to have got the high command's message. Health Minister N. Srinivasulu Reddy, who is viewed as a prominent dissident, disclaimed any association with the dissidents. "I spend only 1 per cent of my time and energy on politics and the rest on development," he said. However there were those like Transport Minister G.V. Sudhakar Rao and S. Venkat Reddy who continued to voice their dissidence. They are opposed to his choice of M.A. Aziz, a former

APCC(1) president, as party chief.

Still. Chenna Reddy must have been quite pleased at the show of support that greeted him on his arrival at New Delhi on July 19; all his ministers barring the three dissidents and 80 other MLAs had flocked to the capital to receive him. And with good reason. For one, changes are imminent in the state cabinet, and MLAs hope he will favour them. Second, the Government plans to appoint chairpersons to about 60 state corporations and other institutions: appointees will be provided with a car and a telephone, besides receiving a salary.

The chief minister has already made it obvious that the people he chooses for these posts will be those loyal to himself and to the high command. For instance, the chairmanship of the Society for Employment and Training in the Twin

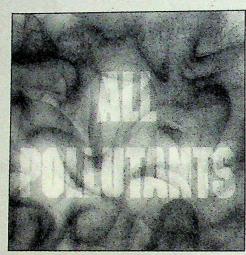


Reddy with MLAs on his return

Cities went to Khader Ali Khan, and that of the Andhra Pradesh Dairy Development Corporation to K. Chandramouli Reddy, both personal supporters of Chenna Reddy. Another person to be rewarded is former director-general of police S. Anandram, who headed the special investigation team into the murder of Mrs Indira Gandhi. He was made chairman of the Andhra Pradesh State Trading Corporation at the instance of Rajiv Gandhi.

There are many more such posts waiting to be filled and Chenna Reddy knows that MLAs will be on their best behaviour as long as the appointments are kept hanging. Clearly, when you are going to use the stick, it helps to have a few carrots in hand.

-AMARNATH K. MENON



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## Religious Row

#### BIP guns for Christians



FOR years, the BJP had carried on a bitter campaign against Christian missionaries in Madhya Pradesh's tribal belt. Being in the opposition,

its campaign had perforce to be mostly restricted to words. But ever since it came to power four months ago, both BIP members and the state's Christians had expected some kind of concrete check on missionary activities. Last fortnight, the party took the first step towards that when a senior member moved a resolution in the Assembly





Patwa (left) and Iyengar: bitter battle

calling for "immediate steps to check conversions done by foreign missionaries by use of force or allurement".

The resolution had the full support of the Government. Backing the motion, Chief Minister Sunderlal Patwa said: "Although a law to check forcible conversions exists, missionaries adopt nefarious means to spread their faith."

No one could quarrel with the resolution the way it was worded, seeking as it did to check conversions by "force or allurement". So it was no surprise that the resolution was unanimously passed by the Assembly.

Most Christians, however, are likely to see the resolution as another broadside in the war against missionaries being conducted by the BJP.

Arecent one came at the meeting of the National Integration Council, where Patwa alleged that foreign mis-Sionaries were traitors who were mostly interested in proselytisation instead of social service".

Christians did not respond meekly. Indira Iyengar, who heads the Madhya Pradesh Christian Association, sought

306b

permission from the President of India to sue Patwa for "spreading hatred against Christians".

Patwa countered by asking Iyengar to face him "in the court of the people instead of in a court of law". Iyengar then dashed off a letter to the chief justice of India demanding protection from "the threat held out by the chief minister". The BJP Government, she alleged, was out to curtail the constitutional rights of the Christians.

On the face of it, the BJP's campaign against Christian missionaries might seem a case of intense paranoia. For there are just 3.52 lakh Christians in the state, hardly a threat to the Hindus whose cause the BJP claims to represent. What the party fears, however, is the successful Christian proselytisation efforts in the tribal belt.

Two districts, Surguja and Raigarh in particular, have shown a surge in

the number of Christians, almost entirely attributable to conversions. In 1951, the Christian population in Raigarh was 14,345; by 1981 it had shot up to 1.44 lakh. In neighbouring Surguja. the number of Christians went up from 545 to 28,210 during this period. In contrast, the total population of the two districts had grown by only 100 per cent during this

period.

Another bone of contention for the BIP is the expulsion order served in 1984 on 11 aged priests, most over 70, who had been working in the country for over four decades. The Supreme Court later granted three of the priests a stay while the others were allowed to continue temporarily under executive order. The BJP alleges that the missionaries had indulged in "anti-national activities" and had obtained a stay due to their "links in powerful quarters".

The missionaries argue that India is their home. Says father Louis De Raedt, a 76-year-old Belgian priest working as a librarian in Bhopal's Campion School since his expulsion from Surguja district: "After 50 years in India, I can only speak an outmoded kind of Flemish. What would I do in Belgium?'

With that debate not yet settled, the repercussions of the BJP resolution are unlikely to be confined to Madhya Pradesh. The BJP and Christian organisations are certain to ensure that. -N.K. SINGH

### **Power Games**

#### Turmoil over school grants



FORMER chief minister Pratapsinh Rane describes him as "just a pawn". Another former minister characterises him as "the Goan Don Quixote".

Congress(I) leader Wilfred DeSouza dismisses him as a "defector". But Goa's 63-year-old Chief Minister, Luis Proto Barbosa, who heads a disparate coalition government formed after a group of Congress(I) MLAs crossed the floor last March, is proving to be more than a match for his opponents in the endless game of political kabaddi being played in what was once a stable state.

"There is some attempt to dislodge every government which is in power. But my government will last because we have come together willingly," asserts Barbosa, responding to reports that not just opposition Congressmen but even disgruntled leaders of the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party

Barbosa: in a hot seat



(MGP), the powerful senior partner in the Progressive Democratic Front Government, are plotting to unseat the chief minister.

For Congress(I) MLAs, the latest opportunity to hit back at the man responsible for pushing them out of power came with the Government's decision not to give grants to Englishmedium primary schools. Last fortnight, south Goa, a Congress(I) stronghold where schools are predominantly English-medium, was in turmoil, with rasta rokos, bandhs and jail bharo agitations. But ironically, the language stir also divided the pro-Konkani Congress(I). While the organisational group supported the

Government's policy, the legislature group led by DeSouza argued that since Goa hardly had any Konkani-language schools or teachers, the sudden change-over would only help Marathi spread further in the education system.

Education Minister Shashikala Kakodkar, of course, denies this vehemently. But by sowing discord among Konkani supporters, she has increased her support in the pro-Marathi MGP stronghold of north Goa, to the discomfiture of her main political rival within the party, Deputy Chief Minis-Ramakant Khalap.

Though Khalap played an important role in bringing Barbosa to power, the chief minister has shrewdly exploited divisions within the MGP to retain his hold over the coalition. He denied Khalap the coveted PWD portfolio, giving him finance and other portfolios without much power of patronage.

The ambitions of the MGP, with 18 MLAs, pose the biggest threat to Barbosa. As for the six ex-Congress(I) MLAs who crossed over with him, he has no worry as long as he has the support of Churchill Alemao, the re-

sourceful 40-year-old minister of tourcommands ism who reportedly enough muscle power to keep any dissidence in check. "With governments, this merry-go-round will be there. Look at Delhi. But our government will last the full term." asserts Alemao. But the immediate future of the coalition government depends on the Supreme Court, which will decide any day whether Barbosa. Alemao and other former Congress(I) MLAs now in the government are to be treated as defectors.

-M. RAHMAN in Goa

did you have an agree-

V.P. Singh: Yes. We

ment with Devi Lal?

#### BOTTOMLINE BY D. BUNKER

## **Issuing Forth**

THE enigma that is Prime Minister V.P. Singh is never more apparent than at his press conferences where, between sips of the

hot water he is always in, he fields the barrage of questions from agitated journalists with his usual air of vague nonchalance and befuddled bravado. Last fortnight's press conference was no exception. Excerpts:

V.P. Singh: Sorry I'm late. I was waiting in Vigyan Bhavan for you to fire your questions. I'd forgotten the venue was Silly Fault.

Prem Shankar Jha (whispering): Sir, it's Siri Fort. V.P. Singh: Right. Mr Siri Fort will ask the first question. If it's about the recent crisis in the Government, the answer is that there is no crisis. Next question?

Indian Express: How can you say there is no crisis? Thirteen ministers resigned including yourself.

V.P. Singh: Stability does not lie in numbers. If all of them had resigned I would say it is a crisis. But that didn't happen, so where is the crisis?

Patriot: But the resignations were over your actions or the lack of them. Isn't that a serious enough issue?

V.P. Singh: Sorry. I will only answer value-based questions. Yours was an issue-based question. Who's next?

Times of India: But that is the basic issue. There is a crisis and you are trying to devalue the issue.

V.P. Singh: I am the prime minister. If the prime minister says there is no crisis, how can there be a crisis?

Hindustan Times: Then why did you resign if there was no crisis?

V.P. Singh: Who says I resigned? I wouldn't be sitting here answering issue-based questions if I had resigned. In any case. a few resignations every now and then are good for the party and the country. It keeps everyone on their toes. That's what I call good political manage-

The Hindu: The question everyone is asking is



are in total agreement. Independent: That is no answer. You are merely evading the issue.

V.P. Singh: What can I do? When we don't talk you people say there is a tau-tal rift. When we talk, you say there is a deal. It is the media that is causing all the confusion

The Statesman: Could you please answer the question? Did you have an agreement with Devi Lal over Chautala's reinstatement?

V.P. Singh: This is all blown up by the press. If there was no crisis or conspiracy you people would have nothing to write about. You should be happy instead of getting so agitated. Next question.

The Hindu: You still haven't answered any of the questions you have been asked so far. Can we have a straight reply to a straight question? Did you know Chautala was going to be brought back?

V.P. Singh: It is the press that is responsible. I only read about it in the newspapers. How was I to know the MLAs' would Kau-tau and bring back Chautala?

The Telegraph: But you are the prime minister of the country. Surely you should have been informed before anyone else.

V.P. Singh: Actually, it is the fault of the Intelligence Bureau. They also thought I had resigned so they informed Rajiv Gandhi instead. But these are minor issues, there are far more serious issues we should be

talking about here.

National Herald: Judging by your responses, there don't seem to be any serious issues at all to worry about.

V.P. Singh: You see, our kind of democracy is a self-healing process. As long as we continue to have the support of the people, there is nothing to worry about. That's all for now. We will meet after the next crisis.

Press (in chorus): See you tomorrow.



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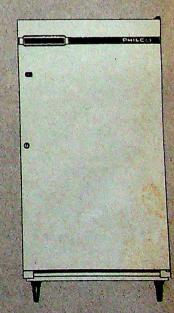
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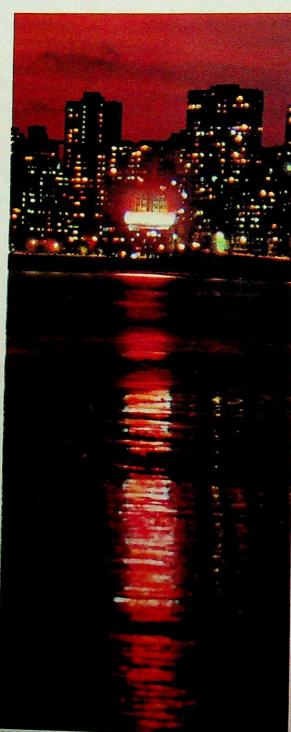
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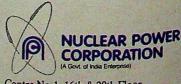
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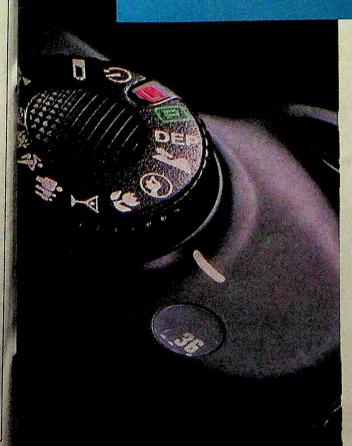
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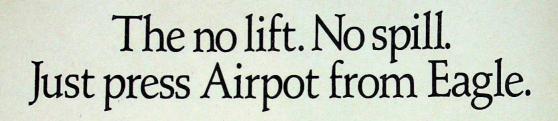
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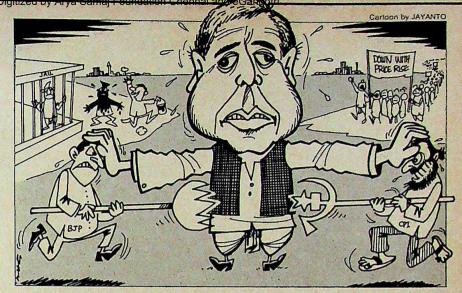
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## Up In Arms

#### h Bihar, the party gets tough

RONY may be the stuff of politics. But the Janata Dal seems to be afflicted by more than its fair share. the crisis that followed V.P. Singh's offer to resign may have nearly degroyed the National Front Government at the Centre. But in an ironical wist, it saved the Janata Dal Government in Bihar.

That day, the working committee of the state BJP had convened at Hazaribagh, angry and determined to take a final decision on whether to continue supporting the Janata Dal Government in the state. Since the BIP's support is crucial to the state Government's survival, Chief Minister laloo Prasad Yadav's fate hinged on which way the mood in the BJP would swing. Fortunately for him, the crisis at the Centre intervened. BJP President L.K. Advani who had come to Hazaribagh rushed to Delhi to help



resolve matters. Said state BJP chief Tarakant Jha: "The sudden development at the Centre stopped us from thinking of a tough line right now."

But that did not restrain it from voicing trenchant criticism. It aired its concern over soaring prices, the deteriorating law and order situation in the state and the worsening condition of educational institutions at all levels. Worse, it said, while Bihar was heading for bankruptcy, the state Government had not argued its case with the Centre for more royalty on minerals mined in the state. The complaints may have been legitimate. But the BJP seemed to be more piqued that Yadav had never consulted it.

An even more serious cause for ire is Yadav's actions in Hazaribagh, a communally sensitive region. Yadav had asked the administration not to

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### Cleaning Up

EW governments need to make an impression. One stratagem governments resort to, without exception, is the crackdown on corruption. Last fortnight it was the turn of Veerendra Patil's Congress(I) Government to wield this weapon.

The Patil Government has set up a three-member committee headed by P.P. Bopanna, a former judge of the Karnataka High Court, with an impeccable reputation, to identify undesirable group A and B officers who have served for more than 25 years, or are more than 50 years old. The Government will invoke powers under the civil service rules to compulsorily retire such officers.

Says Patil: "The Government does not want officials who are corrupt or deadwood." The eightmonth-old government has also set up a bureau of efficiency, audit and vigilance in order to revitalise the administrative apparatus.

The setting up of the committee is expected to actually put into practise the power the Government has always enjoyed, of weeding out corrupt and incompetent officers. In the pastithas been wielded indifferently. Says a senior LAS officer: "During the Emergency, many officers were compulsorily retired, but subsequently half of them came back."

Karnataka has some 250 IAS officers and 100 ips officers. With the exception of one IAS officer who was

Patil: cracking down



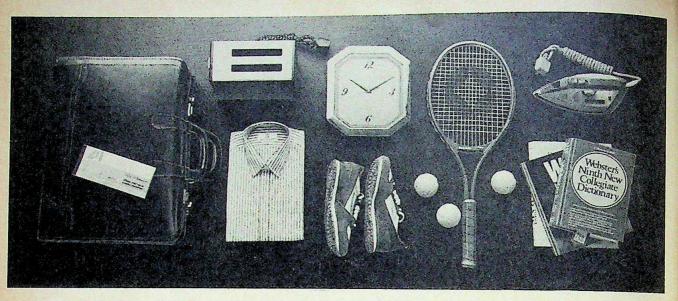
dismissed 15 years ago on charges of moral turpitude, no one has ever been compulsorily retired. The statutory committee headed by the chief secretary which has to meet at least twice a year to review the records of the officers has hardly achieved anything due to lack of political will.

Now the chief secretary has been asked to ascertain the assets of officers after they joined service. And the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms is busy computing data on suspect officers. Says a young IAS officer: "Undesirable elements will be weeded out. It'll definitely have a salutary effect on the administration."

Functioning independently of the Government, the Lok Ayukta has in the past seven months, raided the residences of two IAS officers, one irs officer and one irs officer and uncovered concealed income. Three other group A officers also fell into the Lok Ayukta net.

All in all, the real worth of the move will only be known once the committee makes its recommendations. But there is some value in the fact that it is already putting officers on the alert.

-C.B. YESHWANTH KUMAR



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a Ramnavami procession along aparticular route in Mahudi village, a lecision the BJP feels was made to appease the CPI. The party is also angry hat Yadav did not keep his promise to pisit the spot to find a solution. In protest against the administration's anning of the Ramnavami procesjon, nearly 4,000 processions in neighbouring villages have been suspended by the people.

Two other incidents have helped antagonise the BJP. Last month, a youth smeared black paint on party MLA Khagendra Kumar, when he was on dharna in front of the deputy commissioner's office. The party suspects an official hand in the incident. Then, another party MLA Chunni Lal Rajbanshi was arrested and locked up for a while when he went to Banmankhi police station in Purnea to make an enquiry.

Choosing Hazaribagh as the venue of the working committee meeting was no random decision. The party's following in the region has grown dramatically. "We had set a target of five lakh members but found we had crossed the 7.5-lakh mark," says General Secretary Yashodanandan Singh. The party played a political card as well, reiterating its demand for a separate Vananchal state comprising Chhotanagpur and Santhal Parganas.

Yadav dismisses the BJP's allegations. When his government was formed, he says, the BJP and the CPI had extended their support unconditionally. "No one will be allowed to dictate terms now," he adds. And in any case, he insists, he will not compromise on his policy of secularism.

Brave words. But today the BJP with its 39 members is crucial to Yadav's survival. The other crutch, the CPI with 23 members, cannot prop up his govemment on its own. But Yadav is Preparing to muster up support. After the assembly elections, three Janata Party legislators and nearly half of the 30 independents have become associate members of the Janata Dal, the party claims.

And according to Janata Dal chief Upendra Prasad Verma, 25 more members have pledged support to Yadav. The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha's 19 members are already backing Yadav. Very soon," says Verma, "our strength will cross 163, the minimum required for survival.'

Neat mathematics. But perhaps ho fragile to allow Yadav to continue to cock a snook at the BJP.

181 90

-FARZAND AHMED



### Sacking Spree

#### Javalalitha acts up again

HEN Jayalalitha wants to make news she usually ends up creating chaos. In her latest comeback from self-imposed exile, the temperamental and all-powerful general secretary of AIADMK has arbitrarily dismissed more than 30 party members including former ministers S. Thirunavukkarasu and P. Kolandaivelu, and two MLAs K.K. Ramachandran and S.D. Ugamchand.

A senior AIADMK leader summed up Javalalitha's and the party's tragedy by saying: "Her attitude is I will be chief minister or I will sleep at home." The fact is that the problems in the AIADMK often start when she actually wakes up. For the last six months she has been playing hide-and-seek with her party, hibernating for long spells, then jolting awake periodically to wreak turmoil.

It was not that long ago when she made her presence felt by scrapping all party posts and appointing a high-level political committee. Earlier, in yet another move, she had announced that she was quitting politics and it needed the intervention of none other than Rajiv Gandhi to force her to reconsider her decision. Her latest bout of illogical ire against her own partymen is seen as another act of tomfoolery in the continuing comedy that Jayalalitha's politics has become.

Says Thirunavukkarasu: "There was no need for this. We were being cold-shouldered for a long time but we put up with it. Why expel us now?" R.M. Veerappan, who was taken into the party after Janaki Ramachan-

Jayalalitha: whimsical ways

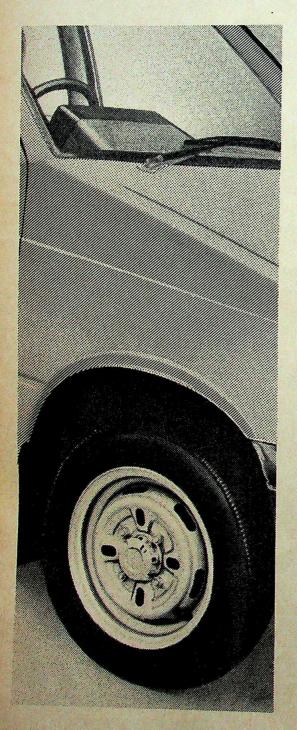
dran's retirement and was subsequently sidelined, sounded a warning note by espousing a policy of reprimand and forgive towards those who had committed mistakes. This unleashed a stream of vitriol from Jayalalitha backers like Treasurer Madhavan and S.D. Somasundaran who accused Veerappan of betrayal. This had Veerappan reiterating his allegiance to Javalalitha, but there are indications that the rebel group is slowly getting together.

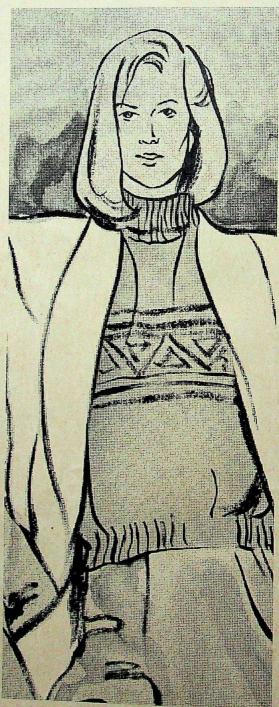
Now the expelled members say they will not return even if they are offered higher party posts, for they feel it will not make any difference to the party nor will it benefit the cadres in any way. The only alternative, according to them, is to form a joint leadership that excludes Jayalalitha.

Another significant fall-out of the recent action is the increasing suspicion that Jayalalitha's attitude to the DMK is softening. The first indications came when she said that the AIADMK would serve as a "constructive opposition to the DMK". This created rumblings within the party and nothing more has been heard on it since. Interestingly, Natarajan, her controversial aide, has been a card-holding member of the DMK.

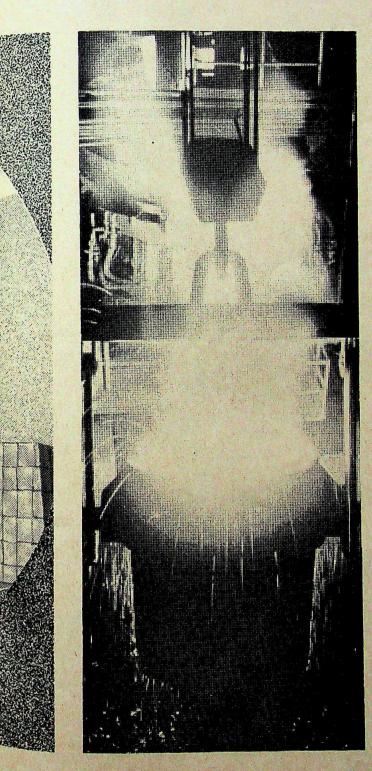
It is obvious that Jayalalitha will not be able to get away with her whimsical and confused way of functioning for long. At Thirunavukkarasu's birthday bash ironically on the day of his expulsion, Jayalalitha's portraits were disfigured. It seems that at last even AIADMK leaders are discovering that they too have political backbones, and can display them without the fear of having them broken by Javalalitha. -KAVITHA SHETTY Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

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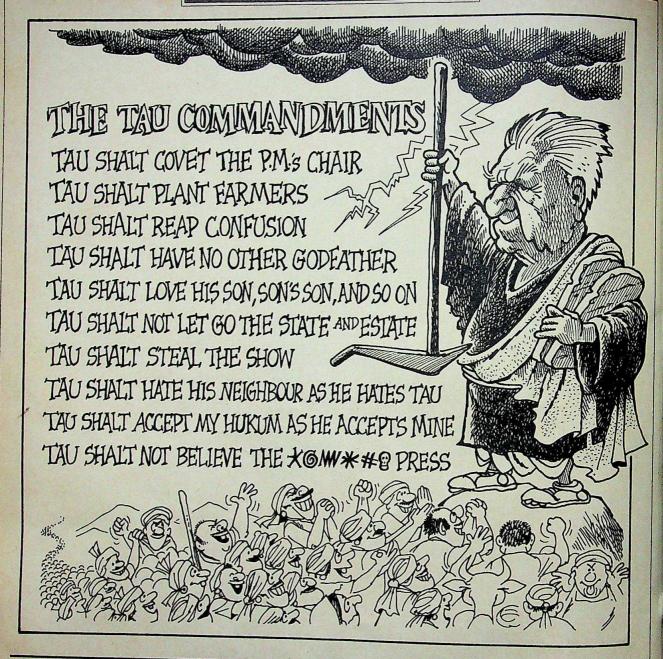
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#### SIGN POSTS

DIED: Ardheshir Furdonji Sohrabji Talyarkhan, 93. A prolific and tren-



chant columnist even at his age, 'Bobby' Talyarkhan was a legendary figure in sports journalism. He was the first man to bring sports to the doorsteps of millions through

his lively commentary on AIR.

CONFERRED: On K. Jagannathan, and M. Sambasivan, eminent professors of neuro sciences, honorary fellowships by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, Glasgow, UK. They are the first Indians to have been so honoured.

RAIDED: The offices and factories belonging to controversial corporate



high-flyer Abhey Oswal, by the Directorate of Central Excise (anti-evasion). The massive operation involved 500 sleuths and over 40 business

establishments of the Oswal group in three

OFFERED: Planning Commission member L.C. Jain himself as hostage, to

the United Liberation Front of Assam in place of the kidnapped Indian Oil Corporation general manager. "If they just want a hostage, I am willing to be one," said Jain.



DIVERTED: A Bombay-bound passenger, A. Jain, on to a Calcutta flight by Indian Airlines staff at the Delhi airport. Airline officials later flew him to Bombay on a complimentary ticket.



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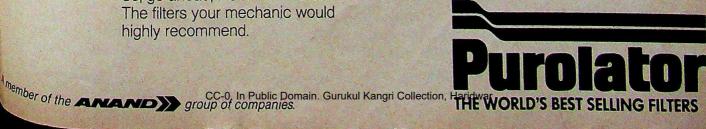
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#### GUJARAT **Turned Tables**

• POLITICAL fortunes have a way of flip-flopping. Politicians shooting off their mouths one moment can easily find themselves at the receiving end the next. So discovered Ashok Bhat, the firebrand BJP legislator.

Till yesterday, Bhat was the chief spokesman of the consumers fighting for their rights in the state Assembly or on the street. Consumers were in fact his political constituency.

Then came the turning point: the assembly polls in which the Congress (I) was humbled and the Janata Dal-BJP combine went on to form the Government. Chief Minister Chimanbhai Patel in a shrewd move allocated the crucial civil supplies portfolio to Bhat.

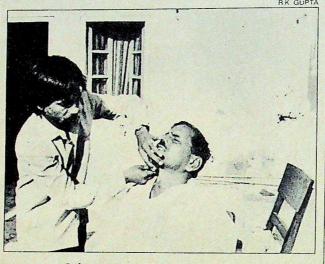
The acid-tongued Bhat is now quite miserable. He finds himself in a helpless



Bhat: in the dock now

state. He has yet to control the prices of essential commodities, particularly groundnut oil, which is preferred by most Gujaratis. Last fortnight, the oil price sky-rocketed to Rs 33 a kg, the highest ever, and the helpless Bhat was caught in a no-win situation. Though anti-price rise rallies are yet to become the order of the day, the Left is demanding his resignation and murmurings of protest have begun. Bhat is getting a taste of his own medicine.

#### UTTAR PRADESH **Cutting a Fortune**



Suleman gives Yadav a close shave

• RECENTLY Mulayam Singh Yadav had to bow to his barber, and not simply to get his hair cut. When he became the Uttar Pradesh chief minister, Yadav's barber of 10 years, Mohammed Hanif Suleman demanded his small cut. The 35-yearold Suleman wanted a shop in the posh Janpath market in Lucknow's Hazratganj.

Yadav agreed; then forgot. After a fruitless wait of a months. Suleman stopped visiting the chief minister's house.

That jolted Yadav, and

the Government swung into action. As there was no shop vacant in the area, the Lucknow Development Authority evicted a field office of the Power Department to make place for Suleman's shop. In the process Suleman jumped a queue of 1,250 persons, to get property which has a market value of around Rs 5

Thus opened Bombay Hair Dressers last monththe first salon in Janpath. Says Suleman: "I deserved this much for all my seva.' That's cutting a fine deal.

#### PUNJAB **Elusive Extremist**

• TWICE in the last six months did the Punjab Police pick up a foreign-returned villager from near Jalandhar following messages from the police headquarters, and twice did they err in letting him go.

But in doing so, little did they realise the importance of Kuldip Singh Samra. Not only is the Interpol looking for him, he also carries a reward of 1,00,000 Canadian dollars (about Rs 14 lakh). In a Toronto court shoot-out, Samra apparently killed two persons, including a Canadian lawyer.

His name also figures

prominently in a controversial book, Soft Target, which pointed to the involvement of some Indian officials in Canada in incidents of extremist violence-a charge denied by the Indian Government.

Samra was finally nabbed from his village on June 25 by the CBI. He confessed he'd been eluding arrest by staying in different countries. He, however, denies any links with extremist violence in Canada or elsewhere. But the truth will be known after he is extradited to Canada, proceedings for which are on in a Delhi court.

#### ORISSA Free Wheeling

 DESPITE his advanced age and bypass surgery. Orissa Chief Minister Biju Patnaik remains as indomitable as ever. On a Wednesday, the former ace war-time pilot ventured out on a cycle, intending to pedal his way to the secretariat. Hardly had he crossed the gates of his house than his cycle tumbled and the six feet four inch frame of the chief minister lay sprawled on the road. Patnaik continued his journey on a journalist's scooter and when near the office shifted to a cycle-rickshaw.

While most labeled the adventure a publicity gimmick, Patnaik insisted it was his way of emphasising the need to conserve petrol. The Government had ordered initially that ministers should stay home

Patnaik: conservation drive



Wednesdays, or walk it to the secretariat. But the ministers have found ways of circumventing the ban. Now on Wednesdays, the ministers prefer to be on tour, as Patnaik's order decrees that the ban holds only as long as the ministers are at headquarters.

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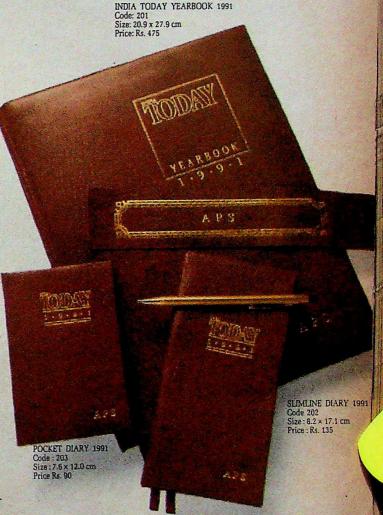
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KASHMIR

## Lives on the Line

Features Editor SHEKHAR GUPTA visited the infiltration-prone areas along the border of northwestern Kashmir where a deadly game of hide and seek is being played out. His report:

Nthe entire subcontinent it is difficult to find a stretch of land consecrated with the blood of so many soldiers. Every pass along the 10,000 ft-long crestline that surrounds the Uri bowl, a three-hour drive north-west of Srinagar, holds the key to the Kashmir valley. Every pass has been contested by two armies in three wars. Every hill is a monument to a legendary soldier.

As is the bridge over Uri Nala, where the metalled road makes way for a steep,

bumpy jeep track. The bridge is named after Jamedar Nand singh of the 1st Sikh Regiment who ordered his besieged platoon to fix bayonets and charge into murderous fire to the cries of "Bole so nihal". His posthumous Mahavir Chakra the A

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owed a Victoria Cross earned the Arakans, and was a testimy to the desperation with sich the two armies have coval this strategic land.

Just how strategic is evident in the vantage point at the 300-ft high Rustam post here the jeep-track termites. Straight ahead lies the 652-st high Haji Pir pass, the iging post for all Pakistani schief in Kashmir for four ades. In 1965 the Indian my captured it in a spectacucharge and, in an act comrable to Israel giving away eGolan Heights, the Govern-

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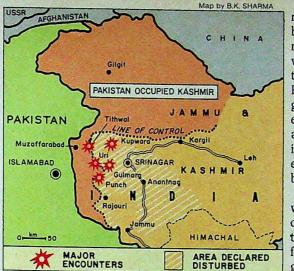
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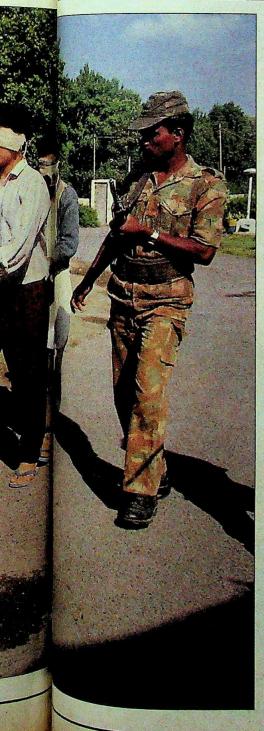
eport:



measures to reduce tensions, a quiet but bitter war was being fought in the mountain ranges guarding access to the valley. With the snows melting, the traffic of armed, trained infiltrators from Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK) had grown into a steady stream. "The next eight weeks, till it snows in the heights, are crucial. They know it and we know it," said a senior Indian army officer explaining the bitterness with which the battle of wits is being fought.

Several pitched battles in the last six weeks have resulted in the death or capture of around a hundred infiltrators. Each encounter brings more work for the security agencies' Joint Interrogation Centre in Srinagar and swells

Photographs by SHARAD SAXENA





he scale of infiltration makes it clear that in its bid to subvert the valley, Pakistan has pulled out the stops.

ment returned it to Pakistan after the Tashkent accord. Today, scores of tracks radiating from Haji Pir are once again alive with the same threat that Major Ranjit Singh Dayal's paratroopers had tried to vanguish in 1965: infiltration.

Last fortnight, even as the two governments were discussing in Islamabad Infiltrators captured by the army (left) and seized weapons: sinister designs

their inventories of captured Kalashnikovs, rocket-launchers, plastic explosives, anti-tank and anti-personnel mines and, lately, cyanide capsules. The cyanide is a recent development, and no one is known to have used it yet.

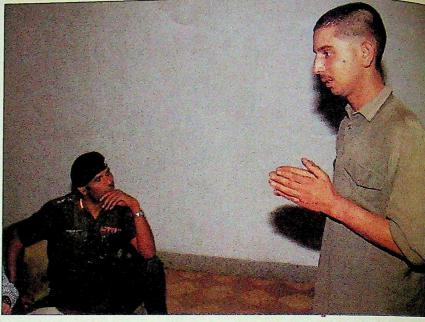
That may change. Soldiers involved in the bloody hide-and-seek have noticed a growing willingness on the part of infiltrators to join battle. Last fortnight they ambushed a security forces patrol near Tithwal, killing four soldiers before losing five of their own men in the swift counter-attack. What the forces consider more significant, however, is the encounter earlier (on July 8/9) in the desolate Gulmarg Heights.

An 11-man patrol of the 3rd Battalion of the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles noticed movement in the bushes along a

ehrajuddin, 16, was among the infiltrators ambushed near Uri. His mates shot him when he tried to flee.

ravine. The junior commissioned officer commanding the patrol and his deputy. a naik, decided to check. Both were cut down by Kalashnikovs. The rest of the patrol took positions, radioed the base and waited for reinforcements. The infiltrators, 17 in all, defied each call to surrender. But after 28 hours of defiance, their nerves snapped, and they came out in a suicidal charge, Kalashnikovs blazing. Thirteen died, one was captured and three escaped. The man captured was a porter. The "real" fighters fought to the finish.

This batch belonged to Hizb-ul-Mujahedin, the most Islamic and pro-Pakistani group, and the current favourite with Pakistani intelligence



services. An account of the group's suicidal journey comes from Mushtag Ahmed Dar, the one caught alive. Shaking with fear, he tells the story of how he was enticed to go to POK by the militants from his village Karalpura and then trained by men who "seemed to be soldiers in civilian clothes". Dar says his handlers told him their idea was to raise

an army of one lakh Kashmiri fighters with a stockpile of armaments that would be unleashed on the Indian state at an opportune moment.

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Officers say the recent encounters, including one last fortnight near Poonch in which 34 infiltrators were killed, point to a pattern. The Pakistanis have six to eight thousand trained men

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they want to smuggle in with before end-August. Around this will be built a network of activists denough to throw the Indian Army balance in the event of a conflict or to dit white in a long low-intensity flict. The weapons carried by infilors are not new but are clean and dialmost always with Chinese markspointing to a single-source supply. Other innovation is the anti-tank he in which an anti-personnel mine he fixed to make it blow up even der the weight of a light vehicle.

OUT if the forces today have some confidence, it is partly because of the improvement in intelligence. A twork of agents is being strung tother from the shreds of a four-decade-Ispy system. One of Governor G.C. mena's first steps was to bring about me coordination in the functioning of I a dozen security organisations, th with its own intelligence network en working at cross-purposes with erest. Selective killings of IB operators d scared off the rest. The state CID, ghted by mixed loyalties, was a write-The CRPF had no intelligence worth rname. The BSF was confined to the rder, and the army intelligence had its

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sensors turned across the border.

Some of that is changing now. Driving arrested suspects around in unmarked cars to point out other insurgents, has proved effective. The value of good intelligence is also evident from the fact that the half a dozen or so arms captures in the cities in the past month have all been based on tip-offs, yielding

Mushtaq Ahmed Dar, 19, was the lone survivor in an ambush in which 13 intruders and two soldiers died.

more than the entire neurotic operation of house-to-house searches. "Intelligence is like a shy maiden. It stays away. But once a beginning is made things become easier," says Jameel Qureshi, veteran police officer and advisor to the governor.

But officials think they are still intercepting a bare 10 per cent of the traffic. They are realistic enough to know that no matter how many men they put on the job, and how good the intelligence, they will never be able to intercept more than a fraction of the infiltrators. Their challenge at the moment is to increase that fraction to a degree where risks force the new infiltrators to think twice.





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HE trial promised to be as dramatic as the courtroom scene in a Hindi film. Indeed, the star had been lifted straight from the tinsel world of Bollywood: Amitabh

Bachchan himself. Having flown in to London with his mother Teji, he was ready to stand in the witness-box to testify and face cross-examination for the sake of his mild-mannered brother, Ajitabh. Outside the court, crowds of teenaged fans jostled for a glimpse of the matinee idol, holding up banners in his support. Inside, English and Swedish lawyers discussed strategies in

AJITABH BACHCHAN

## Earning a Reprieve

### Swedish daily tenders apology in libel case

Back in New Delhi, official sources admitted that the apology and the Swiss authorities' rejection of the Indian letter rogatory seeking details of those suspected to be holding numbered bank accounts with money from the Bofors pay-offs were set-backs. But they insisted that the London case was a victory against a foreign newspaper,

high court and the Swednewspaper's fate seemed sealed when its first challenge-against Ajitabh's suing in two countries-was rejected on March 25. Dagens had argued that the case

should only be heard in Sweden because only 200 copies of the newspaper were sold in Britain.

On July 12, the newspaper suffered a second loss when it opposed Ajitabh's application for an order that the hearing should be held before the court went into summer recess on July 31. Rejecting Dagens' plea that the case must be heard in Stockholm first, the

The daily claimed that it had been misled by persons who had been investigating the Bofors scandal.

conspiratorial whispers.

As it turned out, however, the libel case slapped by Ajitabh against the Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter-for naming him as the man behind a Swiss account containing money from payoffs in the Bofors deal-was a bit of an anticlimax. Even before the trial could begin in the English high court on

July 19, the newspaper's counsel offered an apology that amounted to an abject surrender to Ajitabh.

"I came here looking for a fight," Amitabh said later sitting in the woodpanelled court 11. "But this film ended with the credit titles." Still, there were emotional scenes aplenty. As Judge MacPherson ruled that damages be paid to Ajitabh, his film star brother fended off hordes of autograph hunters to give his mother a hug that indicated visible relief.

'The Bachchan brothers have won," he told INDIA TODAY. "For four and a half years nobody believed us. Finally the truth has come out." For the Bachchans, it was a triumphant occasion, and they celebrated with a champagne dinner at the home of their solicitor, Sarosh Zaiwalla.

■ Ajitabh Bachchan: jubilant Sarosh Zaiwalla

not against the Indian Government or investigative agencies who are still confident of a breakthrough. CBI Director Rajendra Shekhar led a team to Switzerland to deliver a new letter rogatory and has been given a free hand to hire the best lawyers.

The case began with a report in Dagens on January 31 titled "Breakthrough for Indian Bofors investigators. Gandhi's friend received the money". The report said Ajitabh was behind a secret sixth Swiss account and had bought an apartment in Switzerland with Bofors money. Some time after, Ajitabh, declaring that he was not involved directly or indirectly in the Bofors deal, sued for defamation in London and initiated criminal proceedings in Stockholm.

On March 2, he issued a writ in the

court fixed July 19 for the trial.

The Bachchans weren't complaining. After trying for several years to clear their names, they had smelt victory for the first time. And backed by leading British libellawyers Charles Grey and Edward Garnier, they were in a hurry now.

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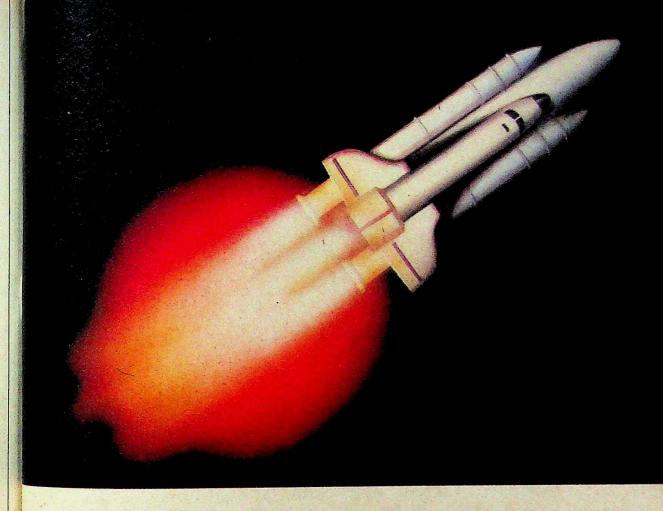
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As the hearing proceeded routinely, informed sources said, Ajitabh's counsel submitted a report by a leading British investigative agency saying that the entire story about the sixth Swiss bank account was fabricated. The report claimed that no one not even the relevant Swissmagistrate—would have known exactly which accounts were frozen when the Dagens story appeared. The Swiss magistrate who ordered the freezing of the accounts on the basis of the Indian FIR went on military duty the day after issuing his order and returned only three weeks later, the agency is reported to have said.

But no such document needed to be furnished in court on July 19, when Dagens Nyheter's chief counsel, David Eady, surprised everyone by reading out an apology before the trial could

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begin. The apology was tendered on the authority of the newspaper's Editor Christina Jutterstrom and its Swedish legal adviser, Peter Danowsky, who had flown in to London.

The statement said that as a result of "further information" Danowsky had obtained from Switzerland that morning, he and Jutterstrom were "now completely satisfied that they were misled earlier this year in trusting information from persons directly involved in the investigations into the Bofors transaction on behalf of the Indian Government".

After an adjournment, the court reassembled to hear Ajitabh awarded damages and costs and his counsel Charles Grey say the allegations by Dagens Nyheter had not only caused distress to Ajitabh. "it also caused embarrassment to Rajiv Gandhi".

One portion of the statement, which significantly was agreed to by both the parties, read: "A remarkable feature of this case is that the defendants received the information upon which they based their story from sources close to the present Government of India.'

Later, Amitabh signalled plans to go ahead with proceedings in Sweden in an attempt to nail the people behind the Dagens report.

As the victors celebrated their courtroom win, Zaiwalla, a leading India-born solicitor in Britain, accused the National Front Government of victimising him because he had represented Ajitabh. But his complaint was drowned in the sound of the Bachchan brothers' popping of bottles of Moet champagne, a sound that threatened to spill over to New Delhi.

-DIPANKAR DE SARKAR in London

AMITABH BACHCHAN

## "V.P. Singh has a lot to answer for"

HOURS after a British court verdict redeemed him in the controversial Bofors case, Amitabh Bachchan spoke to DIPANKAR DE SARKAR in London. Excerpts:

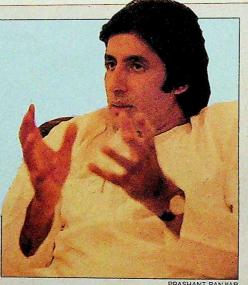
Q. What is your reaction?

A: We are delighted. The Bachchan brothers have won. But I also feel outraged and disgusted at the statement in court that the Indian team investigating Bofors was, in fact, the source that planted the story in Swedish newspapers. As an Indian, it was shocking and extremely embarrassing to find Swedish and English lawyers demeaning my country.

I have been saying from day one that we are not involved in this imbroglio and for four and a half years nobody believed us. Finally the truth has been revealed. V.P. Singh should now file an FIR against his own investigating team.

O. What's your next step?

A. There will be no political activity, just an effort to let the people of India know exactly what my family and I went through. The Bachchans do not manage contradictionsthey expose them. We are going to continue our legal proceedings in



PRASHANT PANJIAR

Sweden as they are criminal in nature. This will give us an opportunity to get the names of the persons in the investigating team who were involved in this whole affair.

Q. What are you going to do now that the Swiss Government has returned the letter rogatory which had named you and your brother?

A. I would like to know what were the grounds of suspicion for including my name. There was no prima facie evidence against us and yet our names were included. My name wasn't in the FIR but it is in the letter rogatory. Can the сві explain this to me? Is it a fact that when these names were presented to special judge R.C. Jain in Delhi, he refused to include them in the letter rogatory for lack of prima facie evidence? And that he was thereafter removed from his post because he refused to include these names? What was the nature of the additions made subsequently? Who signed them and was he duly authorised? Is it a fact that the first set of 19 to 20 names was sent on January 26 and that a second

set of names, numbering between 22 and 25, was despatched on February 2? I want to know why these names were not made public while the ones in the FIR were. Were the people whose names were included in this list informed about it? I know I wasn't. Neither were my brother, our companies or our lawyer.

Q. Does that mean you are re-entering politics?

A. No. No more politics. It's an area in which I have failed because I didn't know the job. It involves

manipulation and lobbying and that's something I've never done and won't be able to do now.

Q. Has Rajiv Gandhi requested you to re-enter politics?

Q. What do you think are the political implications of the verdict?

A. Personally, I want to know from V.P. Singh why he misguided the entire nation without any evidence. For a person who became the very epitome of integrity and who fought against corruption, he has a lot of explanations to give. He said he will not pursue a policy of vindictiveness and the law of the country will take its own course. Well, the law took its own course in the British high court, but V.P. Singh's course of vindictiveness has not changed. He has now re-opened my brother's FERA file which had been adjudicated through a quasi-judicial order running into 60 pages. A legal process had taken place. But according to him, this was a whitewash job by the previous government. Actually it is he who is imposing his own law.

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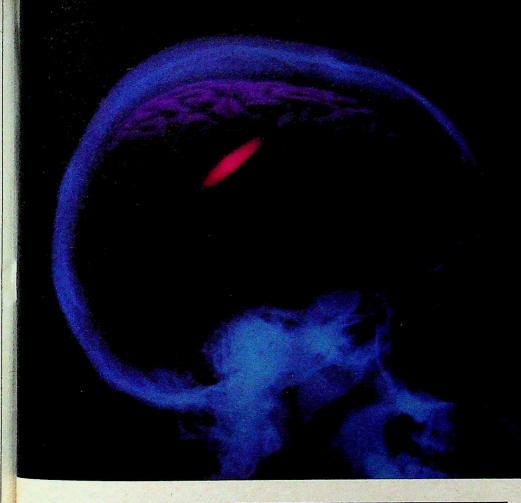
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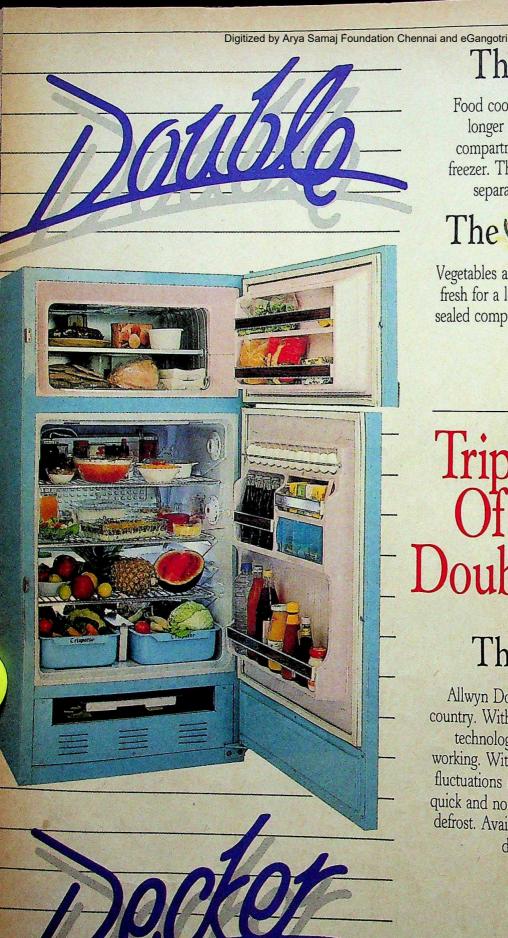
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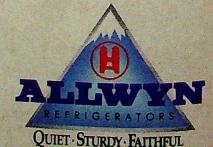
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# A Stormy Calm

### Freedom is being savoured, but political trouble is brewing

EPAL'S courtship with democracy may no longer be governed by strife and tumult, but ripples continue to mark its surface. True, a normalcy has settled on the Himalavan kingdom three months after the mass uprising that cut down the stature of the monarchy and installed an interim government vested with both executive and legislative powers pending a new constitution and election. But the normalcy is deceptive. And even as people get used to freedom, they continue to live in fear of losing it. Grim-faced Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai sums it up when he says: "We are going through troubled times. Things are not as normal as they ought to be.'

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Or, one might add, as they appear. For the winds of freedom and democracy are evident everywhere. The past three months have spawned at least

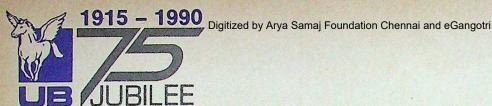


five major political parties and around 30 new publications. Political rallies are now commonplace. Graffiti against the interim Government is plastered all over Kathmandu. At the Teaching Hospital at Maharajganj a handful of patients, wounded during the movement for democracy, are on fast demanding better treatment and rehabilitation. At Hotel Kathmandu, leftists disrupt a fashion show and force the organisers to abandon it. And at the open air auditorium, the royalists stage a rally to protest rising prices. Says Radhakrishna Mainali, communist leader: "The veil of secrecy is gone. The Nepalis have been freed, have become both outspoken and critical. And it has tremendous moral value."

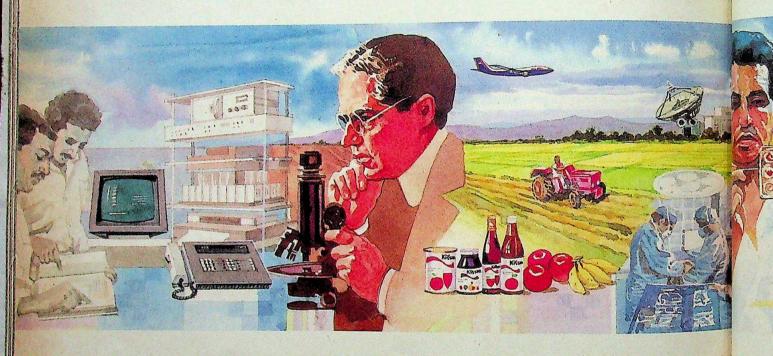
Much has changed, visibly. No longer are the routes the king will drive through closed seven hours in

Photograph by PRAMOD PUSHKARNA





## Portrait of a 75 year olee



Pharmaceuticals and petrochemicals. Processed foods, polymers, electronics and energy products. Engineering, telecommunications, paints and biotechnology. That's the business portfolio of The UB Group today. A group that began 75 years ago as one brewery. The pace of growth and diversification has been accelerated by the Group's

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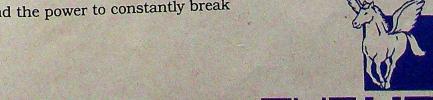
POLYMERS BIOTECHNOLOGY.

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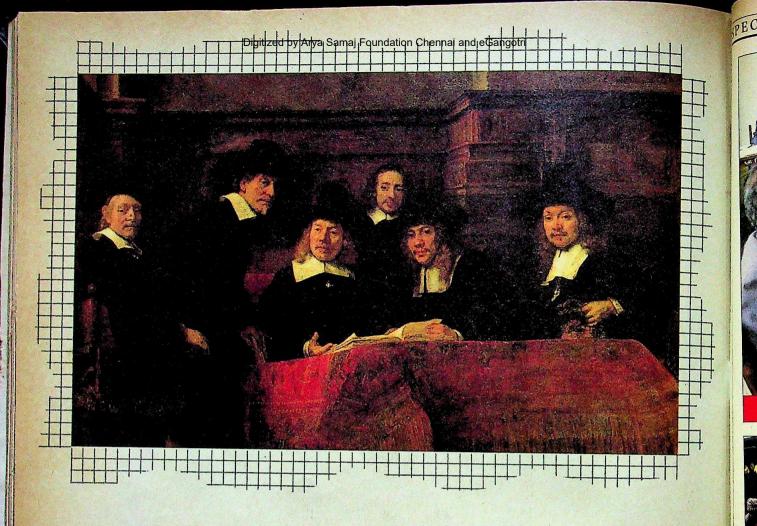
leline thieved a track record for excellence even abroad ficantly perating in 26 countries around the worlddiagno tough its association with the Jenson & substitutholson Group. Backing this drive is the sing old ancial prowess of a Rs. 14 billion group; access ndards the best technologies the world over through roup ha laborators; and the power to constantly break

new ground through the R&D activities of the Vittal Mallya Scientific Research Foundation. On its 75th anniversary, India's fastest growing industrial conglomerate looks forward to the opportunity to take India into the 21st century.



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Constitution Recommendation Commission: accused of appeasing the palace



Prices: spiralling rise creates problems for the Government

advance. No longer do officials in government offices shy from discussing politics, and criticising the Government. No longer do the police arbitrarily arrest people.

But there is a flip side to all this euphoria. There are growing misgivings about the widening rift between the coalition partners, the Nepali Congress and the United Left Front. Giving an edge to this uneasiness are the several brewing crises: deteriorating law and order; rising prices; the voicing of ethnic, religious and regional differences for the first time, stridently and in public.

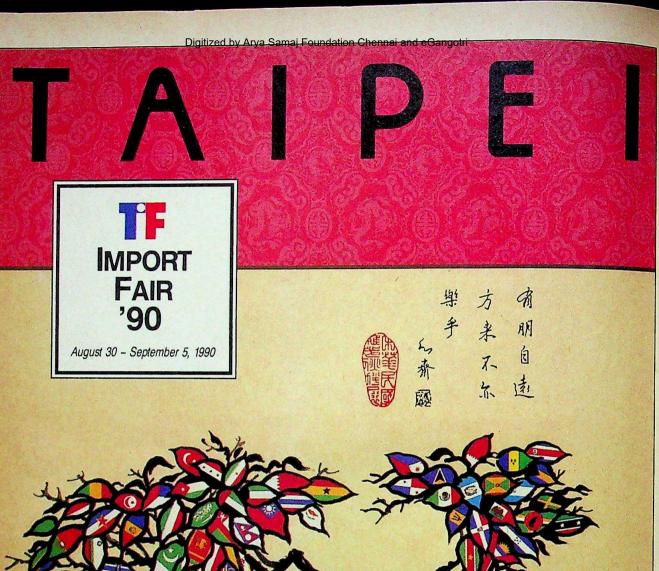
But the biggest crisis of all is being posed by the army. When the ninemember Constitution Recommendation Commission, due to submit its draft by the first week of September, went round the country soliciting opinion, local army units handed over their recommendations in writing. Says Nirmal Lama, a member of the commission: "Alarmingly, army units. all over the country made identical suggestions in virtually identical language. Obviously it was an orchestrated exercise, presumably at the behest of the top brass, most of whom are related to the royal family."

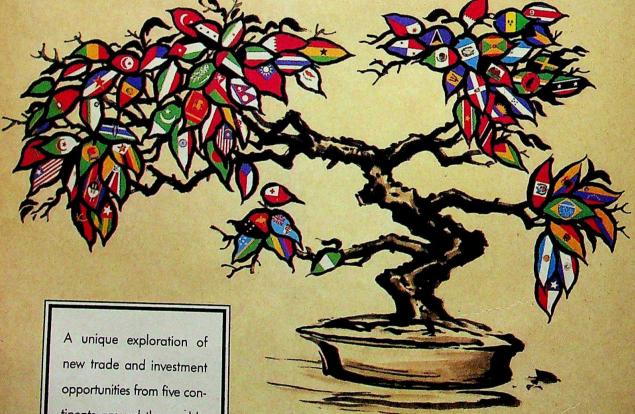
More alarming still were the suggestions the army made. Sovereignty, they said, must rest with the king; Nepal must remain a Hindu kingdom;

and both the army and the police must remain under the king's control. The views of the Nepali Congress and the United Left Front are diametrically opposite. The leftists in fact demand the abolition of articles 20 and 80 of the present Constitution, which vest all power and authority in the king and empower him to dismiss the Government, among other things. The question haunting political circles is how the army will react if its suggestions fail to find a place in the draft constitution.

T the moment the fate of the draft constitution itself is shrouded in confusion and controversy. The commission Chairman, Bishwanath Prasad Upadhyaya, in a seemingly turncoat move has declared that the draft constitution will be submitted to the king. This has led to the three left nominees threatening to resign from the commission. Says Lama: "If it is submitted to the king, we are certain he will not allow the changes." The leftists are still demanding an interim act under which the election can be held, so that the Constitution can be ratified by Parliament. This is not acceptable to the Nepali Congress, which, the leftists feel, is veering towards the palace in order to checkmate the communists.

The United Left Front has reason for its pique. Not a single one of its nominees has been appointed to the board of the government-owned TV, radio, news agency and newspapers. Instead, old and trusted Nepali Con-





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gress members have been appointed. The leftists feel Bhattarai is taking his reform too far. Several former panchas, ministers and royalists, they point out, have been joining the Nepali Congress.

There are many who feel Bhattarai is too naive and soft, and tends too often to act like a forgiving saint. His cosy relationship with the king has raised the hackles of the leftists. Says Comrade Rohit, general secretary of the Nepal Mazdoor Kisan Sangathan: "In Nepali we have a proverb which says that the snake's tail keeps wagging even after it has been stoned to death. The Nepali Congress does not seem to realise this.'

THE Nepali Congress, on its part, tries to justify the induction of the caucus associated with the previous regime by saying that if they are not allowed to join the Congress they will swell the ranks of royalist parties.

What is more surprising is that despite a series of populist measures, the Bhattarai Government continues

to fetch scathing criticism. The law and order situation remains in a shambles. The prime minister blames the police for this. "When people seek their help the police still ask them to contact the Nepali Congress office instead," he laments.

Worse, the restoration of status quo ante in trade relations with India has had no effect on the prices. Petrol continues to hover at Rs 19 a litre; kerosene has fallen marginally by 90 paise; while prices of rice, pulses and edible oil have gone up, primarily because prices in India too have gone up. Finance Minister Devendra Raj Panday blames the pricerise on the traders, and says it is all he can do to prevent them from going up further. This has considerably eroded the popular appeal of the Nepali Congress on the one hand, and on the other generated anti-India feelings.

Discontent has been growing everywhere. While the Government declared a wage hike for the government employ-





ees, incurring an additional annual liability of Rs 136 crore, it alienated the public sector employees and the private sector, who were deprived of the benefit. Its measures to curb the import of foreign goods by raising their prices by 50 per cent has antagonised the powerful lobby of traders. While its imposition of the wealth tax has dismayed the rich and the industrialists.

Yet, it remains doubtful that the pro-Panchayat parties, two of them with the same name and headed by two former prime ministers Surya Bahadur Thapa and Lokendra Bahadur Chand, can dent the Congress hold. The one thing people close to the previous regime are banking on is the possibility of the Nepali Congress and the United Left Front falling out before the elections, and the bureaucracy which remains unchanged coming out in their support. What could prove the real undoing of the pro-democracy parties is the failure of the interim Government to control law and order and contain prices. Says a royalist with a twinkle in his eyes: "If law and order

breaks down, the king cannot shirk his responsibility and must assert his authority.'

Meantime, Birendra has been keeping a low profile. However, according to reports, these days he meets more people and trusts his secretaries less. Some say he is even toying with the idea of becoming a people's king, throwing open the palace to visitors on certain days of the week, and holding a 'Janata durbar'. But his cup of woes is full, and he remains the butt of the people's ridicule.

Undoubtedly, Nepal's experiment with democracy continues to be a volatile one. It is tasting freedom, but is yet to get used to the attendant anarchy as unions thrive, labour strikes increase, slander is given a licence and divisive forces get to work. All this, in combination with the uncertain political situation. keeps 'the Himalayan kingdom on a short fuse.

> -UTTAM SENGUPTA in Kathmandu

MEN'S WEAR

# Readymade Road to Success

The branded men's ready-to-wear market is expanding very rapidly even as many well-known textile mills and garment exporters enter the race.

OR years it was a woman's world. As fashion designers churned out exciting new garments for the fairer sex, men trotted out of nondescript tailor shops wearing mundane designs, boring shades, and shabbily fitted shirts and trousers.

All that is over now. For suddenly, a new revolution is sweeping men's wear. Ready-to-wear men's garments have become available in an exciting array of designs and ranges. Men are no longer going abroad or to exclusive boutiques tucked away in five-star hotels to fill their wardrobes. For whether it be a metropolitan city or a small conservative town, men's fashion is now available right at the doorstep.

Heralding the new revolution is a bevy of well-known mills: Mafatlals, Bombay Dyeing, Bhilwara, Grasim, Re-

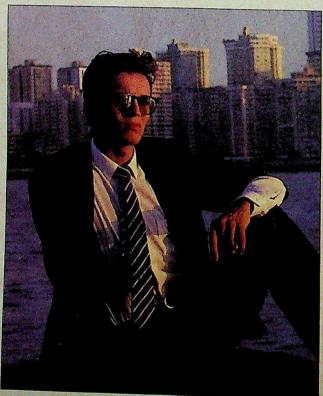
liance, Modern Suitings and VXL. They are setting up slick chain stores in numerous cities, introducing new ranges, tying up with top foreign brands and marketing their products aggressively through high-profile advertising. Taking them on are a host of garment exporterslike the Delhi-based Dwarka Dass Men's Wear which markets Dash shirts and the Bombay-based Dalton Fashions which sells men's wear under the Italian Benetton brandwho are cashing in on the booming market waiting to be tapped in the country itself. Simultaneously, many companies in businesses unrelated to garments, like shoe giant Bata India, too have grabbed a sizeable share of the mass-scale market. And undergarments giant VIP is also getting into the act.

Growth has been phe-

nomenal. Just five years ago, the branded men's ready-mades market was not worth more than Rs 250 crore. Today it is Rs 600 crore and growing at a breathtaking 30 per cent each year. Five years ago, men's wear accounted for only 35 per cent of the ready-mades market. Today its share has gone up to 65 per cent.

New labels keep hitting the market at regular intervals—wooing customers with party-wear, casuals, executive collections, economy ranges and upmarket designer wear. Five years ago there were just 50 brands with a national presence. Today there are 100. Says Kamal Ranka, executive director of Modern Suitings which has just launched the Amadeus collection:

A model displays the yuppie look



NAMAS BHOJAN

"After the women's wear boom it is now time for a men's wear revolution. The market is as big as you can go." Adds Lalit Aggarwal of Dwarka Men's Wear: "We have never had it so good before. I never expected that the market was so big when we entered."

One reason for the boom is that men are becoming far more fashion-conscious and open to new ideas. They are ready to innovate, be more adventurous in terms of experimenting with new designs and styles. Then television is transforming life-styles in smaller cities and towns—as they are getting tuned to urban westernised styles. And the video boom has also helped. Exposure to foreign magazines and films, and frequent travels abroad have been important factors in the growth of the upmarket segment where shirts could cost from

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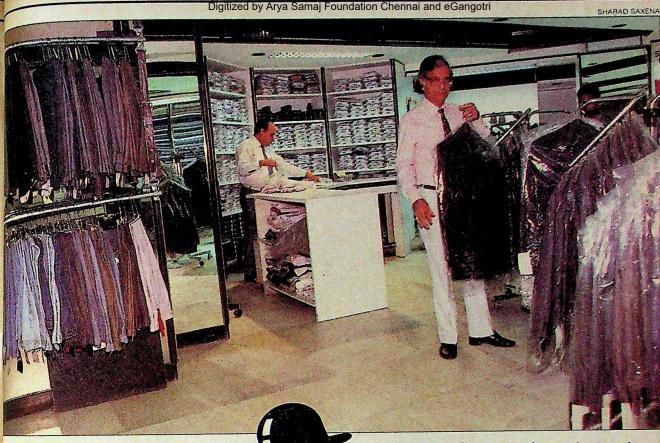
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Rs 300 to Rs 600. And trousers begin from Rs 600 and could range to anything as high as Rs 1.600. At the middle and lower ends of the market, where shirts can be had for Rs 100 to Rs 160, the increasing cost of tailoring has contributed to the boom. In this range ever trousers are available from Rs 175 to Rs 300. Says Ashok Malhotra, a senior salesman in a pharmaceuticals firm in "Ready-to-wear Bombay: garments have become a necessity. It's cheaper than going to the tailor." Vinod Kaul, manager, apparel and accessories, at Bata, claims that as many as 90 per cent of men who used to get their clothes tailored have now switched to ready-mades. He contends that the same thing is also happening in the trousers sector.

That may be an exaggera-

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INDIA TODAY • AUGUST 15, 1990



A Park Avenue boutique for the fashion-conscious

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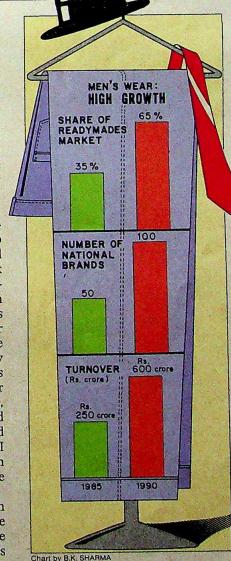
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m but there's certainly been a draatic change in preferences in the last uple of years. The growing middle ass and higher incomes too have jurred the boom. A study undertaken a leading textile company reveals lat the average middle class male has pped his clothing budget by as much as Oper cent in the last two years. Surely hat is good going by any reckoning.

HE life-style revolution is not restricted to the metros. It's also penetrating hitherto untapped Parkets in smaller towns. Asserts Vivek aini, a pesticides dealer in Muzaffaragar in the heart of the sugar belt in estern Uttar Pradesh: "Fancy brands ave become status symbols in smaller lies. Men are ready to spend more oney on clothes today than they ould have done even six to seven years 80." Adds Shymal Gupta, a shopkeeper owns a television shop in Meerut, Mar Pradesh: "Four years back I would to the tailor to get my shirts and dousers done. Today it is different. I end as much as Rs 200 every month my clothes. I wouldn't have done at two years back."

No doubt companies are cashing in the new craze for ready-mades. Take tala for instance. After its success in the metropolitan cities, the company is selling its men's wear in stores in second-rung towns like Patna, Ranchi and Gangtok. Five years ago, the entire turnover of the Bombay-based Zodiacwhich caters to the very exclusive market-came from the four metropolitan cities. Today the figure is down to 80 per cent. The Delhi-based Stencil Apparels sells more than 50 per cent of its shirts in smaller towns and villages. And more than 60 per cent of Bombay Dyeing's Vivaldi shirts are sold in non-metros. Says Atanu Ghosh, product manager of Bombay Dyeing: "The market potential in the small towns and cities is just stupendous. There is a hunger for good quality clothes there".

At the other end, the market for exclusive upmarket men's wear too is growing. Those who can afford the price-tag are shopping at the numerous exclusive male boutiques like Mutiny or Ravi Bajaj which have mushroomed in the last two years. Here outfits could cost anywhere between Rs 3,000 and Rs 15,000—and designers might take as much as a month to churn out a new concept. Today, such exclusive wear accounts for a turnover of just Rs 1 crore. But that should not worry anyone. Prospects are bright. Says fashion designer Rohit Bal who is marketing his Linear designer collection through Inter-Shoppe stores: "Two years ago this segment did not even exist in the country at all. Now it is growing fourfold each year." Result: Bal points out there are





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pore and more designers who are getting into designing men's clothes ioday.

Yet the real action is somewhere else. Among the principal players in the ready-mades market are a host of traditional textile mills who see men's wear as a natural extension of their traditional business—selling cloth. Says Hrishikesh Mafatlal, director of Mafatlal Industries: "We manufacture our own cloth, we already have stores, so there is no reason why we should not enter ready-to-wear. It's the market of the future and we have to get into it in the beginning to establish our brands. Otherwise it will be difficult later on to get a toehold."

Others are getting the same idea. After a successful test launch, textile giant VXL Ltd is introducing Haggar trousers, safaris, ties and jackets through its retail outlets all over the country. Not only that, it is aggressively scouting foreign markets too. Mafatlal has set up a separate marketing wing to prepare a blueprint to launch its Trendzrange of shirts. In the first two years, the company hopes to sell one lakh shirts and rake in Rs 5 crore. It is however concentrating primarily on executive wear-a segment which constitutes the largest chunk of the market. And Modern Suitings is now talking to the famed Londonbased Marks and Spencers chain stores

to sell shirts and trousers under its brand name in India. It has also tied up with US-based Cerutti which will buy back 75 per cent of the production of denim-wear from their plant. Says Ranka: "After a few years mills will have no option but to shift from shirtings to ready-mades. It's world-wide trend".

No doubt there are good economic reasons for the move into men's wear. Garment manufacturers are increasingly realising that after the initial boom the growth in the women's wear market is slowly but surely tapering off.

AYS Bal: "The men's wear revolution is a reaction to the women's clothing boom. Today all the big retail stores are realising that they have reached a pinnacle in growth for women's ready-mades. Profits and margins will have to come

from men's wear.'

There are other hard economic reasons too. Margins in selling men's wear are as high as 15 to 40 per cent compared with a mere 10 per cent for marketing cloth. So it is more

profitable for mills to go into readymades-where market is in any case

getting saturated. Yet selling garments, many companies are realising, is not so simple. Especially when you compare it with selling cloth. The mortality rate is high, with only two out of 10 brands becoming a real success. So many brands

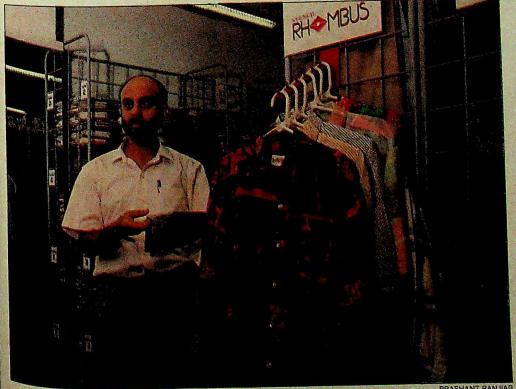
like 9am, Arrow, Monsieur Gents have either gone into oblivion or are just managing to survive. Admits Mafatlal: "Selling ready-mades is a different ball game from selling cloth. Being big does not ensure success."

More important, textile mills have high overheads and can be easily outpriced by small manufacturers who operate on shoe-string budgets. Simply because they have a small infrastructure. And mills are forced to use their

own fabrics thus restricting their access to varieties of cloth from other mills. But small garment manufacturers have no such problems at all. Many of the big boys are surely finding it tough to penetrate the market, Legacy, the Reliance group chain store, has had a tough time trying to make a dent in the market. Numerous brands have disappeared from the markets. For instance Grasim, which initially tried to sell polyester shirts, found the market quite sticky. It is now relaunching its men's wear again with a new range of products—cotton linen shirts-with the hope that they will sell.

Most textile companies farm out the manufacture of shirts and trousers to small fabricators, providing them with cloth and designs to suit their customer profile. In Delhi itself, there are 2,000 small fabricators who

#### I DECIDED TO REDUCE PRICES AND SELL SHIRTS AT RS 100. I WANTED TO BE THE AMIT JUDGE LIFEBUOY OF GARMENTS." STENCIL APPARELS



PRASHANT PANJIAR

# raymond's





Continuing a tradition of excellence.

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#### HIGHLIGHTS

#### **PROJECT**

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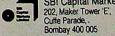
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## Raymond Synthetics Limited

Regd. Office: Link Road, Bilaspur-495 001, M.P. Head Office: New Hind House, 3 N.M. Marg, Ballard Estate, Bombay-400 038. churn out shirts and trousers on a mass scale for the big boys, using simple sewing-machines in dingy bylanes of the city. Yet they are making a lot of money—and have no regrets. Says Ashok Kapoor who once owned a tailor shop: "We stitch as many as 500 shirts a month for one of the companies. Considering that people no longer go to tailors this is an alternative business opportunity for us."

As the lure of big profits draws

more and more players into ready-made men's wear, competition is hotting up. And companies are having to stitch together aggressive marketing strategies to hang on to their market shares, expand them or simply to survive.

Some are trying to project a distinct life-style, creating a distinct image for themselves. Others are trying to carve out niche markets for their products. For instance, Power Apparels, a Bata subsidiary, sells its products under the slogan "Fashion goes Physical" in order to project a sporty image. Its range includes knit shirts, shorts and other sportsswear. North Star, another brand of Bata, is meant to project a casual image and includes a whole range of denims.

Fashion designers are in fact now tying up with companies. Mayur Suitings of the Bhilwara

Group has tied up with Ravi Bajaj to design an exclusive range of men's wear, catering to the higher end of the market.

Other companies too are looking to the higher end of the market—where margins could be as high as 35 per cent to 40 per cent. Dash has launched high-value linen and embroidered shirts under the Irish Collection label

to cash in on the foreign craze. The price: above Rs450. After its success in the lower end of the market Bata is now broadening its range with the aim of tapping the upper end of the market. The company will launch its Accord range of shirts during the Diwali season in order to

cash in on the festive season. The price is above Rs 300.

To bolster its premium image Zodiac has introduced a new range of silk ties priced above Rs 500 called "The King of Kings". And its "Globe Trotter" shirts are targeted at yuppies aged 21 to 40. Zodiac, which exports a major chunk of its shirts to Europe and the Soviet Union is now finding it difficult to meet the growing demand for its products in the internal market. Says M.Y.

lection. And even Benzer, the Bombay based exclusive store—which has only one store—spends as much as Rs 50 lakh on advertising in order to promote its brand image.

Advertising alone is not enough, though. To keep ahead of the competition, companies are introducing new designs at the drop of a button. Amadeus, which until a year ago used to change its designs once in nine months, now churns out new designs

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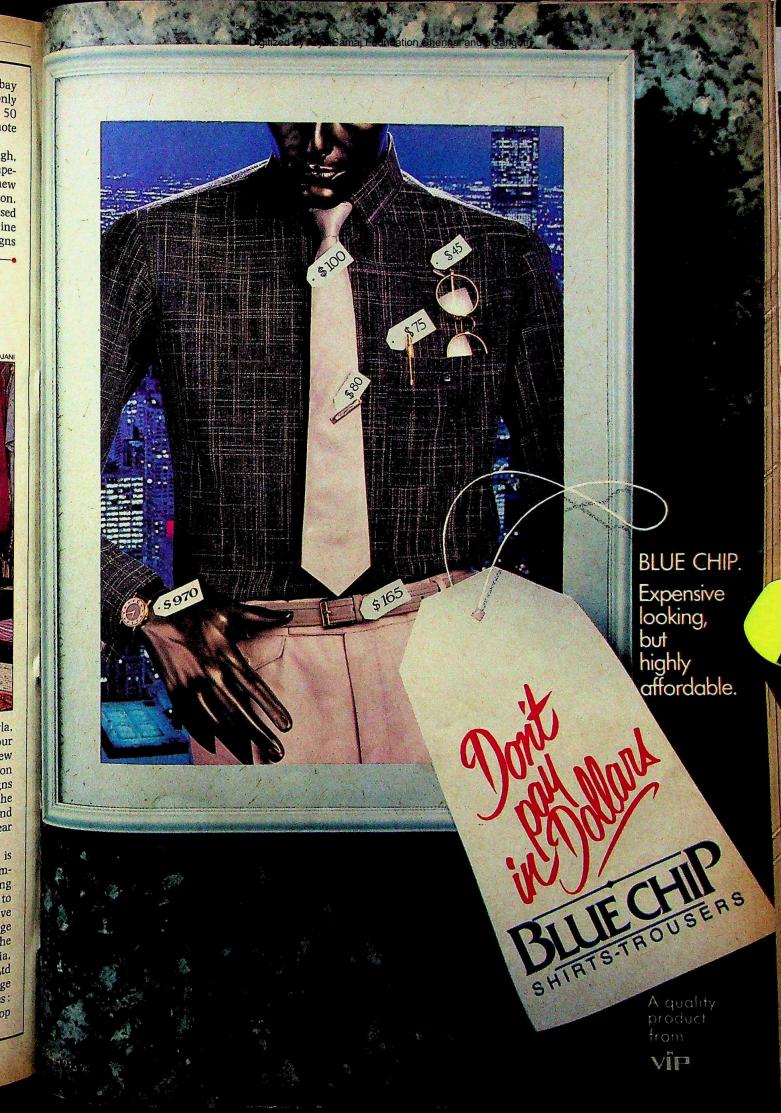
Noorani, chairman of Zodiac: "It is essential to build an image and target your audience clearly. Otherwise your products will not sell."

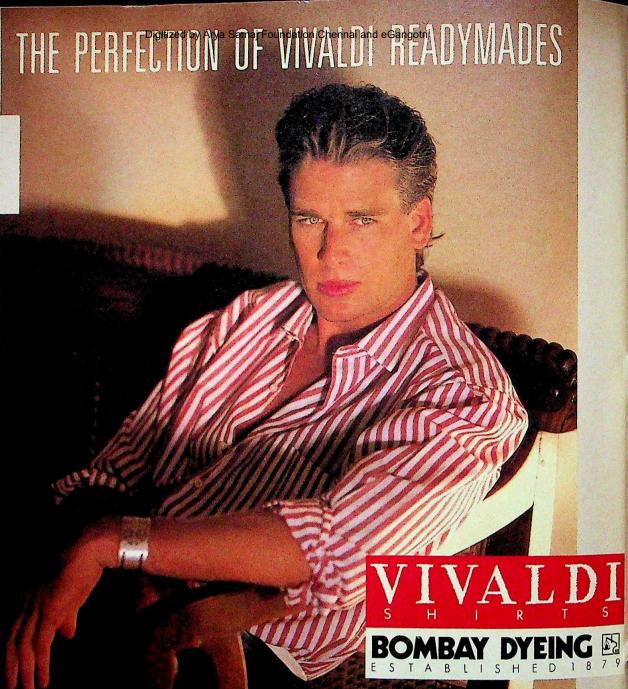
To ensure that they do, companies have invested heavily in advertising. Total advertising spending in the industry is estimated at Rs 30 crore a

year, much of it on television and video. To market its 'Park Avenue collection' for men, Raymonds has an advertising budget of Rs 1 crore; each year the budget grows by 20 per cent. Dwarka Dass spends Rs 1 crore in video and magazine advertisements, extolling the virtues of its executive wear Dash col-

every month. Says Chiman Savla, managing partner of Benzer: "Four years ago we used to put out 25 new designs a month. Today competition has made us introduce 15 new designs a week." The result shows in the collections: the store earns around Rs 3 crore a year from its men's wear section alone.

But as each new innovation is picked up by competitors, many companies are convinced that ensuring customer loyalty to brands is the key to success. One way is to set up exclusive men's wear stores with a whole range of men's goods, selling only the company's brands. Says V.K. Bhartia, executive director of J.K. (Bombay) Ltd which markets the Park Avenue range and pioneered exclusive men's stores: "Your store should be a one-shop





hen the people who excel in shirting fabrics decide to excel in tailoring them — the result is readymade perfection. Vivaldi Shirts from Bombay Dyeing. From the selection of fine cotton and polyester cotton fabrics, right down to the last button, you won't find a thing out of place in a Vivaldi Shirt. What you will find, shirt after shirt after shirt, is a perfect fit. At Bombay Dyeing, the attention to quality is absolute. Because we know that the professional in you expects it.

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So Park Avenue stores, apart from the regular line of men's clothing sell a wide range of colognes, after-shaves, ties, handkerchiefs, wallets. Just a few

months ago it even in-UNITED FASHIONS OF BE troduced shoes, all under the Park Avenue label. Of course it makes sense for the company. For instance, Helene Curtis, a sister concern, manufactures the men's cosmetic range for the stores. However the accessories are not Park Avenue business even though they constitute about 10 per cent of the stores' total sales.

Other companies are following the successful Raymonds' example. Amadeus recently set up stores in Delhi and Jaipur and plans to set up 100 more exclusive men's stores all over the country. These will be stocked with an entire range of cosmetics and accessories. Benetton which has already set up 10 stores is adding 10 more. In addition to men's wear, these will sell watches, undergarments, belts and even sun-glasses. Benetton does not expect accessories to contribute more

than 2 per cent of the total turnover but considers the idea part of its gameplan to build an image. And Bombay Dyeing is all set to open up 50 exclusive Trendz showrooms to sell men's wear and accessories.

Other companies are carrying the exclusivity strategy a step further. The Delhi-based Mutiny is planning to gift designer watches signed by Rohit Bal to its regular clients. At a different level, Snowhite Enterprises, also based in Delhi, has launched a Snowhite Credit Card to woo customers away from com-Petitors. Regular customers can now step into any of the company's showrooms, pick up a product and pay later. To top it all the Snowhite Shirt Card ensures its buyer one free shirt after every 10 purchases—as an added incentive.

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Despite aggressive marketing techniques, however, many companies are waking up to the fact that they have to cut prices in order to make a dent in the market-place. One of the first to get into

the low price, high volumes game was Amit Judge, managing director of Stencil Apparels. "I wanted to be the Lifebuoy of garments. While everyone was going in for low volumes and high margins, I decided to reduce prices and sell shirts at Rs 100, by increasing volumes." says Judge. once a small-time garments exporter and Venetian blind man-

ufacturer who had worked with various designers in the country.

TENCIL cut out frills, dispensed with high-cost packaging and made do with little advertising support. Instead, it set up offices in major cities and got together a sales force which aggressively pushed products through melas, festivals and even door-to-door selling. The result was that while competing brands were finding it difficult to sell more than 2,000 shirts a month, which forced

FOR THE YOUTH."

them to keep prices high. Stencil sold 55,000 and slashed prices. The company has achieved a Rs 12-crore turnover in just two years.

If Stencil could sell at cut-throat prices, it was because it ruthlessly pruned costs. First, it decided to sell directly to shops rather than through dealers who took away a major chunk of the margins. Second, to guarantee an assured market, the company tied up with Bata which picks up as many as 30,000 shirts a month. Now the company has tied up a similar agreement with the Madras-based Binny. And it is also tying up with Mafatlal to whom it will provide shirts in bulk and also market their brand. Says Judge: "We will become a Rs 100-crore company in five years.'

He might just make it. Yet there is no denying that Stencil's success has forced competitors to reduce prices by as much as 40 per cent in the last two years and prodded many new entrants to follow the same route. For more and more companies are realising that this is the only way to survive. Take Bombay Dyeing for example. It initially used to sell shirts at prices above Rs 175. But recently it moved downmarket by launching a cheaper range, and expects sales to go up by 5 per cent.

Says Gurkirat Khera, director of

DALTON

#### While everyone was going for formal WEAR, WE WENT INTO CASUALS SURRENDRA DALMIA



NAMAS BHOJANI

"People Enterprises: Snowhite thought we were very expensive. But we were facing a serious problem getting out of our exclusive high range without compromising our image." The solution: last year the company introduced a low-cost Cityline range. Sales jumped by 100 per cent and today Cityline accounts for 30 per cent of the company's total sales. Even the upmarket Madura Coats which sells the expensive Van Heusen and Loius Philippe shirts is planning to get into

ton which has tied up with Dalton Fashions. Says Surrendra Dalmia, managing director of Dalton: "While everyone was going for formal wear, we went into casuals with loud colours targeting it at the youth. The Benetton connection ensured quality." Dalmia is now talking to Benetton for exporting to Australia and the Far East.

Dalton isn't the only company looking overseas. Stencil recently tied up a collaboration with French garments giant, Lacoste, to set up a Rs 8-

they are buying them right here." The ties market is already worth Rs 10 crore and is growing at a brisk pace of 50 per cent a year. Zorex is now tapping the growing institutional market; it has already sold ties to Grindlays, Godfrey Phillips and many others. Socks too are now big business. Last year, Bata sold 5 million pairs of socks through its stores. The company's turnover from accessories alone is already Rs 5 crore.

What's more, leather accessories

and shoes too are drawing customers. Larsen and Toubro which tied up with Humanic of Austria to manufacture upmarket shoes for export has discovered a growing market within the country. It's selling its La Paz shoes through retail outlets and the expected turnover this year is Rs 3 crore.

Others are cashing in on an assured market from big garments and textile companies which are picking up accessories like belts and wallets as add-ons to their own stores. Points out Prem L. Mahtani, who owns the Bombay-based Metropoli-Leather Goods: "Nearly 20 per cent of our wallets and belts are bought by Bata and Raymonds." The company is tapping the exclusive high-end range for wallets and belts costing above Rs 600 on an experimental basis, a mar-

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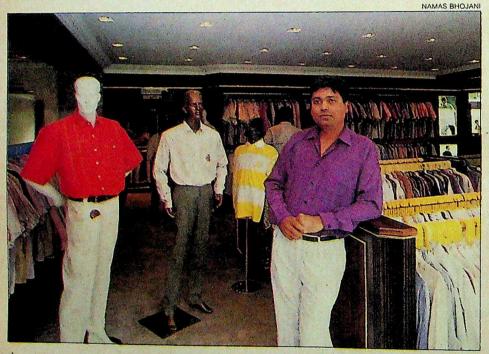
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ket it feels is still untapped.

Searching for untapped markets, building an exclusive image, ensuring brand loyalty, ruthlessly cutting prices—the drive to steal a march over competitors goes on. Yet, fears of a shake-out scarcely seem to prove a deterrent. Newer ideas are continually being thought up. Designers are coming out with light cottons, even simple whites. For party hoppers, there is a whole new exciting range—from loud red colours to soft pink with floral trappings. Stripes too are becoming more pronounced, as business executives get a little more adventurous. And that is reason enough for manufacturers of men's wear to keep their shirts on.

-SURAJEET DAS GUPTA in Bombay and Delhi

#### DUE TO COMPETITION WE MAKE 15 DESIGNS A WEEK, FOUR YEARS AGO WE PUT CHIMAN SAVLA **OUT 25 DESIGNS A MONTH."** BENZER



the economy range.

If some companies are playing the volume game, others are trying to sell their wares under foreign labels. Dupont Sportswear Ltd has tied up with the world-renowned Wrangler jeans in a licensee agreement. Says Chairman and Managing Director A.K. Jalan: "There is hardly anyone in the country today who makes

world class jeans. So when we introduced Wrangler in the market, it sold without any problem at all." Within just two years, the sales of Dupont Sportswear Ltd. have shot up to as much as Rs 10 crore.

Keeping it company is Italian fashion giant Benetcrore joint venture shirts project in India; Lacoste will buy 60 per cent of the products. And Rajasthan Spinning has branded its shirts Pavonnie—an Italian name. The company is hoping to make a dent in the competitive Italian market and export Rs 3 croreworth of goodies.

Meanwhile, the men's wear boom has encouraged an entire industry of accessories-belts, ties, colognes, and designer shoes-with a turnover of Rs 100 crore. Says R.K. Bhatia, managing director of the Delhi-based Zorex Ties which manufactures Bentley ties: "Previously people used to buy their ties from abroad. Now

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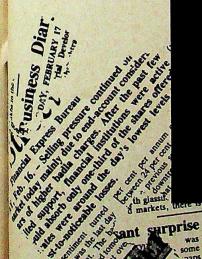
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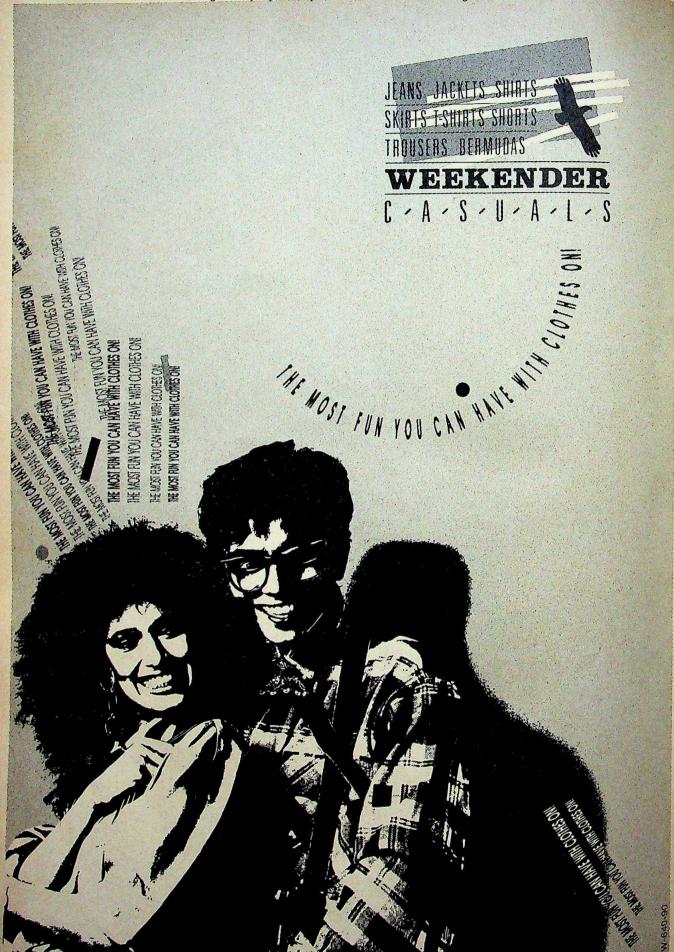
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#### LISTING TROUBLES

HE negative and positive lists of industries which the Industry Minister Ajit Singh had promised soon after announcing the new industrial policy is hanging fire. The Industry Ministry under the direction of Ajit Singh had first prepared a positive list—the sectors in which foreign investments would be encouraged. This included a host of mass-based consumer items like bicycles for instance. Prime Minister V.P. Singh did not reject the list but he asked the Industry Ministry to first prepare a negative list which would clearly earmark areas where foreign investment or collaboration would not be encouraged. He also wanted a foreign exchange neutral list outlining areas where no foreign exchange outflow would be allowed, to be prepared. With all this list-making the very purpose of simplifying procedures has been negated. And of course potential investors will have to spend much time comparing lists.

#### **DIVERSIFICATION SPREE**

HE Shrirams are going on a massive expansion spree after the recent split in the family. Shri Ram Fibres, the flagship company of the Bharat Ram group—which manufactures nylon tyre cord—is planning to invest Rs 150 crore to diversify. The company is toying with the idea of getting into consumer products—manufacturing washing machines and a whole range of kitchen appliances. The Bharat Rams are also scouting for foreign technology to set up two new projects—an engineering plastics unit in Tamil Nadu and a synthetic glycerine unit in Gujarat. On the anvil is a Rs 10-crore investment to set up a new factory for DCM Data Products—which is planned to be a computer company under the group's fold.

#### ENTER, BARCLAYS

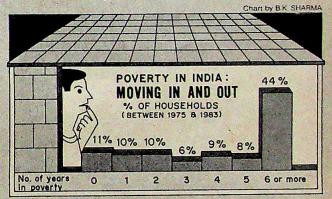
BARCLAYS Bank plc, the thoroughbred British financial institution has received RBI approval to open a branch in Bombay. Barclays will be the first British bank to set-up shop in India after Independence: both Standard Chartered and ANZ Grindlays—now Australian owned—were operating in India even before 1947. But for Barclays receiving RBI permission is merely winning a small battle. It still has to cope with war: south Bombay's skyrocketing real estate prices and the lack of a suitable location for a branch. They don't have much time to scout around amid the concrete jungles of the megapolis. The bank is now scheduled to open doors later this year.

#### LOOSENING CONTROLS

HE most peripatetic minister in the National Front Government, Commerce Minister Arun Nehru, is convinced that India will not be able to increase its share of world trade unless it drastically dismantles official controls on exporters. He was particularly impressed by China and Vietnam's experience in this regard. In China, individual states are today free to import and export whatever they want provided they adhere to a couple of simple norms. And, that could be an important reason why China's exports are three times higher than those of India's. Nehru feels that Vietnam too seems to be following China's example. Thus the portly minister has asked officials in the ministry to prepare a detailed study on the export sectors of different companies all over the world. This report will be made public once it is ready.

#### DRAWING THE GARIBI REKHA

ESTIMATING the percentage of the country's population under the poverty level has always been a tricky business. The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi Arid Tropics, based in Hyderabad, has come out with yet another study which was published recently in the World Development Report on poverty. The institute



which tracked down the incomes of 211 agricultural households from 1975 to 1983 found that only 11 per cent of the households were above the poverty line during the period. At the other extreme, 44 per cent were under the line for six or more years. And nearly 90 per cent of the households were under the line for at least one of the nine years. Of course there is one silver lining in the grim scenario. The World Bank expects that by 2000 only 25.4 per cent of the Indian population will be under the poverty line compared to as much as 55 per cent in 1985.

#### **BUYING A BANK**

HE decade-old Equatorial Bank plc which operates a single branch in London (Estimated deposits: Rs 300 crore) has been targeted by some Indian groups for takeover bids. A couple of months ago liquor baron Vijay Mallya, S.K.Birla and a leading publisher submitted separate bids to take over the bank. The negotiations were at an advanced stage when the existing bank laws in England cropped up as a dampener. According to the Bank of England regulations, any outsider who proposes to acquire more than 14.5 per cent equity in a British bank has to seek prior approval. As the regulations are believed to be rigid and an equity stake of less than 14.5 per cent did not make sense, Indian bidders backed out. But insiders say the deal is still open.



Living Media India Limited, publishers of INDIA TODAY wishes to strengthen its senior level corporate organisation structure in view of its rapid expansion. Its future expansion and diversification plans within the entire communications business continue to be extensive. With its Head Office in New Delhi, the company has offices at 6 other locations in India and an office in New York. More offices will open during the year.

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(MS/4947)

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Preferred age: Between 30-35

Delhi

## **PERSONNEL HEAD**

(MS/4948)

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The Personnel head would be responsible for formulating and implementation of personnel and compensation policies and procedures, industrial relations and the entire administration function at all company locations. Candidates should have a good degree in personnel management from a reputed institution. They should have had around 15 years relevant experience in the personnel and administration area. Knowledge and appreciation of legal affairs would be a definite advantage.

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STOCK MARKETS

## **Bulls on the Rampage**

### Favourable economic policies and monsoons send share prices soaring

HERE'S not been a new crop of middle class investors making a bee-line for the stock exchanges. there is no indication that the estimated 2 million investors who fled the stock exchanges following the crash of '86 have returned. There has been no major new issue by any of the top-drawer companies since the beginning of the year. And there's reason enough to believe that the four companies which put out mega issues this year have not really collected the Rs 2,000-crore they claim to have, but have managed just around Rs 400 crore.

Yet Dalal Street, the heart of the Indian share market, is going thud-thud with excitement. Shares are racing to new highs and the bulls are having a field day. The high-flying Associated Cement Companies (ACC) share, for instance, has doubled from Rs 439 to Rs 810 in just two months. Market capitalisation—the market value of all shares listed in the market—has moved from Rs 47,778 crore in the beginning of the year to Rs 54,239 crore last fortnight, an impressive rise of 13.5 per cent. The Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) 'sensitive' index of 30 leading shares was quoting at an all-time high of 926.92 last fortnight. In mid-January it was at a modest 780.34.

It's a replay of 1985 when the markets boomed following finance minister V.P. Singh's maiden budget. Says a senior BSE official: "We

431.8

(JAN 2)

Chart by B.K. SHARMA

were quite unprepared for the remarkable surge in share prices. But there is a danger that the market is getting overheated and the BSE is taking corrective measures." The BSE even suspended trading in ACC shares for a day last fortnight and imposed stiff margins of Rs400 per share but speculative activity could not be contained. Says R. Sankaran, director of Ind-Global Financial Consultants: "The rise in share prices is not at all surprising. All the economic indicators are favourable."

They indeed are. There has been a rare combine of what scrip-czars call the three "Gs": good economic policies, good monsoons and good corporate performance. When the National Front Government came to power in late 1989, the widespread perception was that they would be "anti-private sector". But fears have now given way to enthusiasm following the budget, new industrial policy and the moves to attract foreign investment. And the monsoons have always had a powerful influence over the stock-markets, amply demonstrated by the runaway fall in share prices after the 1987 drought. Says a

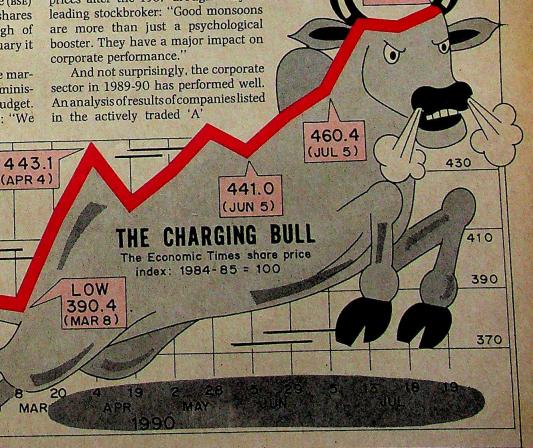
group of the BSE shows that a majority of them reported a surge in profits during 1989-90. Bajaj Auto paid an unprecedented 100 per cent dividend, ACC made a remarkable turnaround after two years of sliding profits and the three largest companies, Tisco, Telco and Reliance also performed well.

But there are indications that the rise in share prices has not been evenly spread out. For example the market capitalisation of the 80-odd companies listed in the 'A' group of the BSE amounts to a hefty Rs 28,513 crore, over 50 per cent of the total. The balance was spread over 1,000 companies whose shares are not actively traded in the market. And so the gains have to be spread out evenly over the market.

A significant factor is that stockmarkets are still dominated by financial institutions like UTI, LIC and the mutual funds of State Bank of India and Canara Bank. Individual investors now prefer to

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# PRODUCTIVITY AND GROWTH

EXCERPTS FROM THE
SPEECH BY THE CHAIRMAN,
MR K. L. CHUGH,
AT THE 44TH ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING, ON 3RD JULY, 1990,
AT CALCUTTA.



Mr K. L. Chugh

On an annualised basis, pre-tax profit at Rs. 570.75 lakhs has spectacularly improved by 107.6% and profit after tax at Rs. 477.75 lakhs by 188.9%. Sales volume has increased by 17.1% and sales turnover by 42.5%. Capacity utilisation at 126% improved by 21.3%. Your Directors are, therefore, pleased to recommend a final dividend of 17.5% for the year, in addition to the 12.5% interim dividend paid earlier, a total of 30% representing an annualised increase of 67% over the previous financial year.

It is obvious that something 'electric' is happening within your Company. Very often what goes behind the scene—the thinking, the strategies, the vision, leadership by example, mutual learning, team commitment to go at any problem, search and research on technologies, and finally the sheer willpower to succeed — do not find a place inside a balance sheet. Let me share with you some of the data relating to the productivity movement in your Company that is leading to steady growth.

'Plant availability improved by 7% as a result of plant health improvement programme. Machine efficiencies improved from 3% to 50% on different products. Waste reduction from 18% to 11%. Energy conservation per unit of output from 3188 KWH to 2633 KWH. Employee cost as percentage of net sales realisation from a dismal 17.5% to 11.5%. Home pulp production increased by 140%. Value addition increased from Rs. 1207 lakhs to Rs. 1908 lakhs. Quality assurance.

Assurance of service. Concern for environment, pollution, safety, housekeeping, health.' Committing itself to the self-propelling route of productivity, the performance of your Company has been remarkable, even dramatic, but it is no time to 'rest on our oars', for though profitable we are still not the industry leaders.

It is only two years since a management change was effected in your Company and, as we start a new decade, it is an appropriate time to take stock of our performance. To develop a perspective for the TTL of tomorrow, it would only be right that we appreciate and understand the India of today and the socio/political/economic forces that propel it towards its destined future. Being primarily an agrarian country, taking its first tentative step towards industrialisation through a first generation of management and skills, the performance of our economy over the last four decades can give some cause for satisfaction. However forty years of well intentioned protection of our fledgling economy, has created an industrial environment which is high cost and yet fosters enterprise that produces poor quality which is not competitive in the international arena.

The India of our dreams cannot be created by reducing the planned efforts required from her citizens. It is only by stiffening the challenge and by demanding more from ourselves that our vision will be actualised.

#### PRODUCTIVITY AND GROWTH

In this perspective I would like to discuss the issues of productivity and growth, their meanings and relationship in an enterprise, and the strategies, structures, systems, skills and culture required to achieve them.

Evolution of the process of a continued pursuit of excellence has resulted in the emergence of new dimensions to productivity. The progressive improvement of results from the available resources on a continuous basis, by the application of new techniques and new methods, is the quest of an enlightened and innovative management. Productivity, therefore, is an attitude of mind. Productivity is a commitment.

Growth of an organisation can be measured by improvement in production, sales, profits, assets, quality of human resource but very often, by a complex set of indices that not only reveal growth in real terms but also give it a relative position. Business managements have learnt, and sometimes to their cost, that growth is certainly not automatic and often requires the formulation of effective strategies and the expert handling by a committed and competent management team. It is our experience that productivity and growth have a unique relationship that is not only supplementary but complementary in nature as well.

Growth creates stresses and strains in an organisation and exposes it to risk, since it creates a situation of managing change. In the years ahead, organisations that will establish a

sustainable competitive advantage in the industry, and deliver on their obligations to stakeholders, are those which successfully integrate the concepts of productivity and growth in their competitive strategies. These organisations will contribute most to the economy and society by the productivity of the resources of an enterprise i.e. men, machines, materials, money, time, land and ideas.

#### THE YEAR OF LEARNING

What we learnt in TTL reaffirms an established principle: that the key to productive growth lies in creating a human organisation with this capability. This process starts with the leadership's imperative to ideate, and to make a simple, clear yet comprehensive statement of a goal which all the people of an organisation can comprehend and empathise with. In TTL, the statement—'the best quality at the most competitive cost'—has served this purpose.

#### A MARKETING ORIENTATION

The next step of your leadership in creating productivity-led growth was to orientate the focus towards opportunities in the market. The primary target market for speciality papers was defined as the 'highest value added segment' and emphasis on product quality became the byword. Whilst the strategy was to reduce the overwhelming dependence on cigarette tissue, the product mix was rationalised to reduce wasteful and uneconomic runs. The synergies of being in the ITC group were taken advantage of, and with Bhadrachalam's marketing network your Company expanded very substantially to give access to new markets to obtain business results. Structurally, the focus on the customer and the market was reflected in the strengthening of the Quality Assurance Group and the formation of the Product Development Committee which creates customised speciality products within agreed time parameters. Productivity-led growth in TTL is built on the comerstone of customer satisfaction.

### CAPITAL PRODUCTIVITY AND GROWTH

Capacity utilisation in your mill increased to 126% during the year under review and to over 140% in the last quarter which is not only a record in TTL but in the industry. This has enabled significant growth in value addition and sales turnover. The will to continually improve on the present situation, however good it may seem or really be, is the operating culture of TTL today. It is the continual effort to apply new techniques and new methods, it is the faith in human progress.

#### TECHNOLOGY AND R&D

The market orientation of TTL has effected the design and development of technology, and the related strategies pertaining to R&D for process, products and the usage of raw materials

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themicals. Process bottlenecks in pulp mill, preparation, paper machines and paper persion are being removed with innovative s and investment wherever necessary.

In the R&D front, your Company has neered the utilisation of jute for manufacturspeciality paper products. The thrust on the of alternative raw materials has provided Company a strong competitive edge, ucing dependence on imported raw erials, and conserving scarce foreign hange.

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Your Company has taken effective steps makea wards energy conservation. Investments have nent of a en made to install a microprocessorntrolled fluidised bed boiler which utilises wer grades of coal and still delivers 10% gher thermal efficiency, and a turbine for comeration and captive power generation impletion of this project during the year will eet the demands of national priorities by inserving scarce energy resources. For TTL it ill enable energy utilisation under 'total ergy concept' and provide self-reliance to our Company in this critical area, enabling ninterrupted production operations in a ghly cost-effective manner which will prove the competitive standing of your ompany

#### ROWTH THROUGH PRODUCTIVITY, **IDDERNISATION AND ECHNOLOGY UPGRADATION**

am glad to report that your Company's dustrial Licence has been re-endorsed from 1,500 tpa to 33,000 tpa. This is a development significance in the history of your Company at, after over 15 years, the licensed capacity of ur Company has been increased by 145%. is would enable growth of your Company, ther strengthening its competitive edge, arelop new products and new markets.

Your Company's strategy of productivity and owth has enabled it to make significant Ogress and achieve a product volume of over ,000 tons last year, with a planned target for 1000 tons for the current year. Your Company taking further steps for growth through odernisation and technology upgradation d is in dialogue with reputed international demisation/technology upgradation progra-Me, your Company is reasonably confident of ming foreign exchange by exporting quality yer products from India.

### HE HUMAN ORGANISATION

Organisations can only grow to the extent to th its people can grow. Though human ource skills through access to the ITCadrachalam group have been tapped, the sing set of people are the base on which the around of your Company has been effected. is a key success factor, since it has created a alle of security and caring, recently further

enhanced by the investments in a school for employees' children, and created a sense of challenge and commitment in the work environment. The style of the personal involvement of top management to energise the organisation, from and on 'the front line' have borne fruit. People are encouraged to think and interact in an open environment with a supportive climate so that they can grow and generate productive ideas which can take root and flower. Investments in human resource development and organisation culture is a priority matter in your Company. It is creating the ethos and culture of a 'learning organisation' which augurs well for future progress.

#### EXPORTS, THE POLICY FRAMEWORK AND THE FUTURE

Your Organisation is committed to formulating strategies for profit, growth and survival, which are in consonance with national interests. In this context our export performance last year of more than Rs. 120 lakhs, including Rs. 51.6 lakhs of third party exports, is 19% higher on the annualised figure for the previous year, and is a noteworthy result.

We welcome the decision of the Central Government to encourage the use of unconventional raw materials by extending excise incentives to all varieties of paper and paperboards. I had ventured to make this suggestion last year, and the timely response of the Government is indicative of the support and encouragement that the Government is willing to provide to promote the progress of the jute farmers and the industry.

In their efforts to become successful international players, countries adopt strategies which are rooted in the natural national advantages which they might possess. The natural national advantage that we have in India is a continental land area. At present, vast tracts of erstwhile forest lands are lying waste and have become inert assets. If these were converted into plantations managed in the government/joint/private sectors, they would not only contribute to the 'greening of India' but to the creation of enormous avenues of yearround rural employment. I hope that the Eighth Plan document where employment and environment co-exist, will compel a review of the erstwhile strategies. I would like to reemphasise that the 'greening of India' programme has vast employment potential and must get immediate attention.

However, no meaningful international success is possible until we encourage the modernisation of, and upgrade and contemporise, our technological base. As I had mentioned last year it would give a significant 'filip' to the industry if as a first step the Government allowed the import of important equipment at least for modernisation under OGL and limited customs duty to 35% as is allowed to machinery manufacturers. For diversifica-

tion of use of jute to paper industry, the Government is actively considering the import of plant and machinery free of customs duty which, if implemented forthwith, will give a thrust in this vital area. The cash compensatory support for export of paper needs to be raised to 20% for logical reasons.

Based on even conservative demand estimates, the indigenous requirements for paper and paperboard by the advent of the next century will be in the neighbourhood of 40 lakh tpa. Meeting this demand will create a spectrum of opportunities for the industry, but will require substantial internal activity and gearing. If however, we restructure the policy framework for the industry, within the purview of the suggestions outlined, in only 2 to 3 years the foreign exchange earnings can escalate almost exponentially to around \$200 million.

#### CONCLUSION

I would like to reemphasise that the real issue is productivity-led growth. The TTL experience has under-scored an important business principle that productivity and growth are inextricably linked. As a result of competitive strategies, based on this principle, and actualised in the various operational areas of your Company, we have been able to contain the unit cost of output, and yet enhance the quality of, and value addition, to the product, to generate customer satisfaction and a growth in market share and profitability.

But as a Company, and indeed as a country we cannot stop here. To become successful international players, we must learn how to learn, and absorb and even create technology. We must become high quality and low cost producers, with the capability of carving a niche for ourselves in a rapidly 'globalising' world.

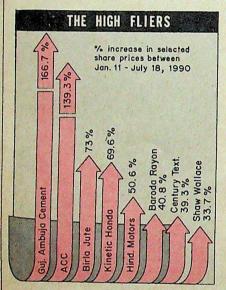
Even as the future unfolds with its challenges, pressures and opportunities, the lesson we have learnt from productivity led growth will stand us in good stead. As long as we remember never to mistake mere size for growth, and mere tasks and procedures for productivity, in the planning and implementation of our business activities, we can continue to look forward to sunny days ahead.

This does not purport to be a report of the proceedings of the 44th Annual General Meeting.



Leaders in speciality papers park their money in mutual funds rather than expose themselves to the vagaries of the market.

The UTI, the big brother of the stockmarkets, made an attempt to curb speculative activity by disclosing for the first time any large transaction which it conducted in the exchange. In early July UTI announced that it had sold 55,000 ACC shares at around Rs 600 to bring down the scrip price, which nevertheless shot up to Rs 800. Last year the institution picked up shares for Rs 900 crore including rights issues. Says Dr S.A. Dave, chairman of UTI: "The inherent trend of the market is upward. Corporate performance is encouraging



and the strong fundamentals have buoyed the markets."

It is not all ticker-tape celebrations at Dalal Street, though. There is cause for worry too. One reason: after the mega issues boom of 1989 there has been a major slump in new share offerings. The situation is expected to improve in August when Finolex Pipes has scheduled a major issue and Lloyd Steel is expected to receive cci clearance to raise funds for its mini-steel plant project.

Meanwhile none of the measures that the BSE took to curb such speculative activity really worked. They imposed stiff daily margins on a few active shares and even placed restrictions on the transactions of stockbrokers. But market-watchers feel the measures don't go far enough as most stockbrokers are flush with funds. Moreover, a couple of foreign banks are believed to have advanced Rs 100-150 crore against shares, which has added to the market frenzy. No wonder those like Dave feel that the composition of the governing body of the BSE has to be changed. S.N.VASUKI

TISCO

### **Under Fire**

#### The state takes on a giant

T promises to be a titanic battle. On one side, the Tatas, the largest business house in the country and the dominant corporate force in Bihar. Ranged against them is the equally powerful figure of Laloo Prasad Yadav, the state's irrepressible chief minister who has launched an all-out war against the giant Jamshedpur-based Tata Iron and Steel Company (Tisco).

Just how serious the battle has become was evident when Tisco Chairman Russi Mody, in an unusual move, called a press conference last fortnight where he declared: "Should the chiefminister wish to discuss matters which are souring our relations at present, nobody would be happier than me to call on him."

The souring of relations started almost as soon as Yadav took over the reins of Bihar. One crackdown after another against the company, hitherto unthinkable in Bihar, made it obvious

that the Yadav Government was out to cut the Tatas down to size. Yadav himself reinforced this when he remarked that the Tatas were not the only industrialists in the country and "we can do without them."

The Yadav Government's vendetta includes:

- ► Cancelling the previous government's decision to waive cess on government land occupied by Tisco under the Land Reforms Act (which exempts heavy industries using government land from paying the required cess). The previous government had decided to waive the cess amount of Rs 5 crore after Tisco had announced major investment plans in the state (Rs 3,000 crore in the next five years).
- Filing cases against the joint managing director and general manager of Tisco on May 7 this year, in connection with the fire which had broken out during the golden jubilee celebrations of the company on March 18, 1989, in which 43 people had died.
- Directing the Labour Department to file a case against Yodogwa Ltd, a

subsidiary of Tisco, on the charge of violation of labour rules because the management had not entered into an agreement with a recognised union.

► Closing one of the blast furnaces of Tisco after a gas leak. The chief minister asked the district officials to inquire into the matter but even before the inquiry report was ready, the unit was ordered to be closed for 13 days resulting in a production loss of 18,000 tonnes valued at Rs 15 crore.

Other issues like a revision of power supply rates to Tisco and a move to take away the management of Jamshedpur town from the Tatas and bring it under a

Y adav is out to cut the Tatas down to size and has said that the state could do without them.





manu

Mody (top) and Yadav: sour relations

municipality have made it obvious that Yadav is gunning for the Tatas.

One reason could be the unusual meeting between R.P. Goenka, a Calcutta-based industrialist and Yadav. The Goenkas are talking to the Bihar government on investing Rs 1,200 crore in sectors of power, tourism, sugar and health. Sources suggest that Yadav is inviting Goenka to Bihar to counter the influence of the Tatas. However, Goenka says: "The Tatas are in the super-league. We are much smaller. We can't replace them."

That consideration hasn't diminished Yadav's campaign. Driven to the wall by a stubborn socialist chief minister, Mody says ruefully: "No industry in Bihar can flourish in confrontation with the Bihar Government. On the other hand, it cannot possibly be in the interests of Bihar for the Government to take an anti-industry attitude." That, however, remains to be seen.

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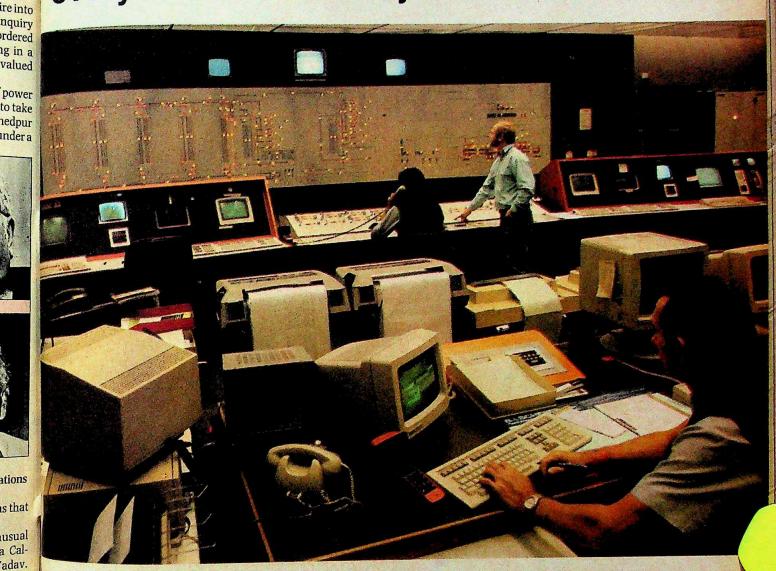
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#### **Tough Moves**

#### New strategy to nab violators

OMING soon: A who's who of the foreign exchange violators of India. Number of entries: more han a thousand. Publisher: the Direcorate of Enforcement, Lok Nayak shawan, New Delhi.

Though not available for public ale (it will be stamped Top Secret), the publication is already the most soughtafter dossier in the corporate world. What it signifies is a change in strategy on the part of the directorate—which enforces the Foreign Exchange Reguation Act (FERA). Instead of depending entirely on intelligence it gathers during investigations, FERA sleuths have decided to create their own information bank. The reason: an alarming fall in the country's foreign exchange reserves which last year registered a steep drop of Rs 1,036.22 crore or 16.4 per cent—the worst in the decade.

Consequently, instead of cracking down on suspected violators indiscriminately and causing panic in the business fraternity, the Finance Ministry's different wings like the Economic Intelligence Bureau, Reserve Bank of India, Chief Controller of Exports and Imports and the FERA Direcorate are coordinating to formulate a cohesive gameplan. Says Revenue Sectetary R.L. Mishra: "We are studying the modus operandi of the violators for effective control and better results.' The ministry believes that by these measures, it will be able to identify a major chunk of Indian money abroad. stimated between Rs 5,000 crore and Rs 7,000 crore (India's foreign exthange reserves stood at Rs 5.041 crore at the end of last year).

After initial sample surveys, three major areas of foreign exchange violation have been identified: non-repatriation of money on exports, underhvoicing of export bills, and money lemitted abroad on fictitious imports. he exporters are mandatorily obliged o remit the foreign exchange within months of any contract. But many cases have come to light where the honey has not been remitted for years. his year, Ganapaty Exports of Cal-Outta was detected to have over Rs 12 ore in outstanding deals with temko Traders of Hong Kong stretchng back five years.

Under-invoicing of exports goes

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undetected for the simple reason that the customs authorities do not concentrate enough on the value of the consignments that are going out. Imports are examined with a fine tooth-comb since customs duty has to be levied.

In many cases, the foreign exchange reaches India on deflated invoices and the excess amount is stashed away in foreign banks. Apart from investing money in lucrative businesses abroad, a major reason for non-repatriation of money is the appreciation in foreign exchange even if it stays in bank vaults. Last year, the Indian rupee slid by 19 per cent compared to the US dollar, 50 per cent to the pound sterling, 64 per cent to the deutschmark and more than 70 per

three years. When the directorate officials checked with the customs it was found that no goods had been imported. All the deals were done on paper and the money was remitted abroad. Firms which imported the goods were totally fictitious.

As the first step of zeroing in on these companies last fortnight, the Director-General of FERA Directorate, T.G. Joseph, shot off a circular to all its 14 units and zones detailing the operation. After collating information on major exporters, the directorate will compare their selling prices with those of their counterparts abroad. They will exchange notes with the customs, value-added tax and income tax departments of these countries. Any dis-

PRAMOD PUSHKARNA



R.L. Mishra (left) and T.G. Joseph: effective tactics

The alarming fall in foreign exchange reserves has forced the various wings of the Finance Ministry to gear up for a crack-down.

cent to the Japanese yen.

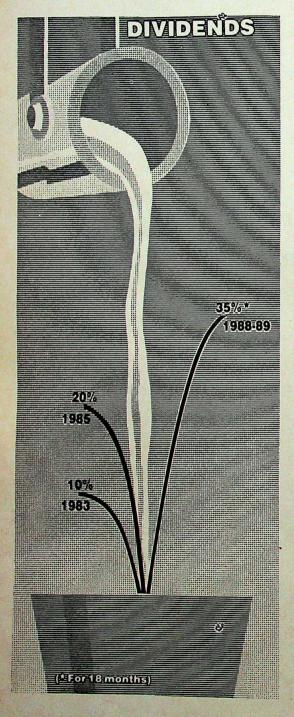
Another area of manipulation is junk imports. Goods under Open General Licence with low duty like lifesaving drugs and books are imported where the importers even take bank loans, subsidies and other government benefits like export preference licences. The incoming goods either exist only on the books or are considerably less in quantity than actually declared. The foreign exchange remitted abroad is invested there.

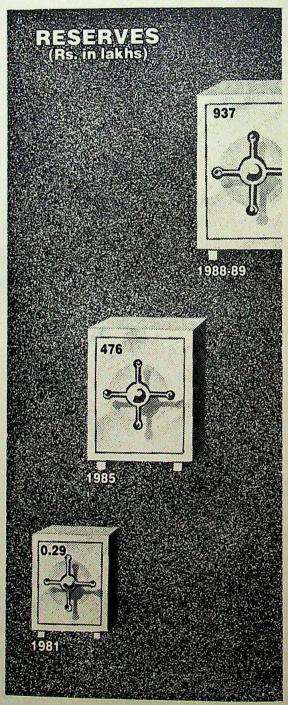
The most glaring case of this kind was unearthed in Bombay this year. A businessman named Prabodh Rawal and his six associates in league with bank officials of six different banks in Ahmedabad and Bangalore imported resins worth Rs 36 crore in the last crepancy will result in proceedings.

The directorate officers will choose 10 to 20 main exporters of their regions and obtain details of their recent major consignments from the controller of exports and imports. Then they will compare prices shown by the exporters and the prevailing prices in the market at that time. If these prices are lower than the rest of the market, further comparisons will be made with the importer abroad. A detailed study of local fiscal laws of other countries is already underway to pin down charges for the authorities abroad to initiate proceedings.

Suspected areas of such violations have also been identified. They are: Calcutta, jute and tea; Deltit, readymade garments; Bombay, diamonds,

# Some Companies Are Always Worth Y







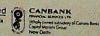
MANAGERS TO THE ISSUE



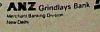






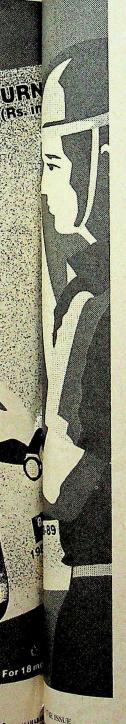








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#### ISSUE Highlights

- Flagship Company of the reputed fast expanding Steel Strips Group with a group turnover exceeding Rs. 125 crores.
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emicals and ready-made garments; adras, leather; Varanasi, carpets; gra, leather; Bangalore, coffee; Caliit, fish and spices; Goa, fish; and landhar, sports goods and hosiery.

The major hitch in overseas operaons till now was that most countries onot have foreign exchange controls nd they show little interest in Irdian vestigations. But once the directoreconvinces them about violations of cal fiscal laws they are obliged to get to the act. For instance, if an Indian company is under-invoicing bills, it is also defrauding the importer country of customs, value-added tax and income tax besides violating FERA here.

In addition, the directorate is also tightening its policy on hawala (compensatory payments) racketeers by involving other countries. Though hawala operations are only a small fraction of the total FERA violations, the directorate does not want to ignore this practice since it robs Indian banks of service charges. In the last four

months, it has taken up about two dozen such cases with authorities in the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, the UK and Hong Kong.

The main fear of FERA officials is that with the winds of liberalisation wafting through the corridors of power, it is uncertain how effective foreign exchange controls will eventually turn out. The business community of course is worried that the new strategy spells a possible return to V.P. Singh's 'Raid Raj'-PANKAJ PACHAURI

POULTRY FARMS

#### **Laying Gold**

#### Large duty evasions alleged

THERE is an angry flutter among the poultry kings of the country. The reason: the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has found a golden goose in the hatcheries and poultry business. In a nation-wide crack-down last fortnight, DRI sleuths raided at least one dozen top egg industrialists in Delhi, Hyderabad, Karnal, Pune and Bangalore. Unbelievably, the directorate claims to have detected customs duty violations of Rs 25 crore and foreign exchange violations running into several lakh rupees.

The operation, personally coordinated by the DRI chief, P.K. Kapur, took almost every major poultry importer in the country in its drag net: Venkateshwara Hatcheries, Essex Farms, J.G. Farms, Rani Shaver, Rapid Poultry Reserve and Breeding Farms, B.L.V. Hatcheries, Hibreed India Private Limited and Hyline Farms.

The controversial imports of poultry stock, the main subject of the the DRI investigations, were from major international companies like Lohman Tierzucht of West Germany, Hypeco Poultry and Euribrid of Holland, Shaver of Canada, Cobb Breeding of UK, Avian Farms, and Deklab of the US.

The DRI's main charge is that Indian hatcheries have been routinely under-invoicing their import bills. For example, a Bangalorebased hatchery imported chicks worth \$40 each and showed the Price as \$1 per chick, thus evading duty on the remaining sum of money. The balance, say directorate officials, was paid to the US exporter through hawala transactions-illegal payments made through irregular and non-banking channels—in a gross violation of the country's stipulated foreign exchange rules and regulations.

The directorate also charges that many hatcheries have made a regular practice of misgrading the livestock that they import. The hatchery owners claim that the chicken are pureline (first generation chicken)

import only 9,000.

Poultry farmers insist that the DRI has struck indiscriminately and haphazardedly. They strongly emphasise that though there may be black sheep in the industry, the majority of the companies are above board. Says Gurdeep Singh, managing director of Hibreed India Private Limited: "It's a highly technical field where all birds are not of the same feather. It (the raids) will have serious repercussions on an infant industry.'

PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

breeds when they are actually grandparent (second generation) poultry. The reason being that in an attempt to encourage the production of improved and more resilient breeds of chicken, hatcheries are permitted to import pureline poultry at zero customs duty. On the other hand, grandparent poultry attracts a duty of 114 per cent.

If such violations are possible at all, it is because importers, pleading that chickens are a highly perishable commodity, get their shipments cleared hurriedly. A hatchery based in Hyderabad thus succeeded in importing 27,000 chicks in one shipment though it had a licence to A poultry farm: ruffled feathers

Arun Goyal, director, Essex Farms believes that the entire business should be viewed in its correct perspective before any action is taken.

With DRI and customs officials insisting that they have detected irregularities of a "gigantic nature", a prolonged legal cacophony is bound to follow. But it is certain that the recent raids will be remembered as a watershed in the sunrise industry which has an investment of Rs 1,400 crore and contributes roughly Rs 2,200 crore to the country's gross national product.

-PANKAJ PACHAURI

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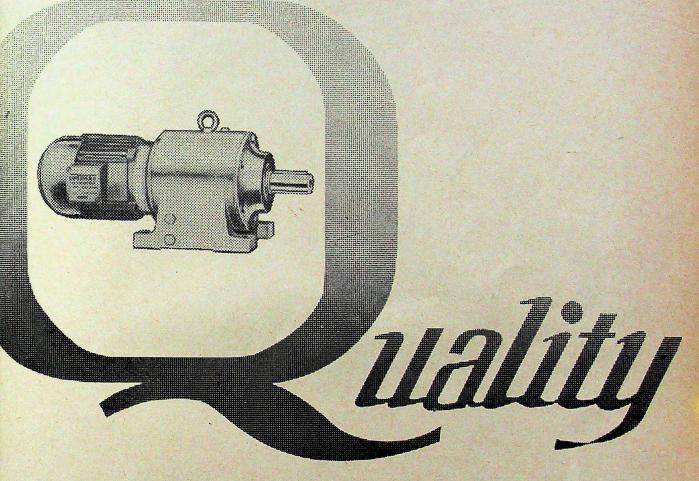
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BCC

#### **Bubble Bursts**

#### Bank struggles to revive

N terms of size and growth, Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCC), run largely by Indians and Pakistanis, has much to be proud of. Begun only in 1972, the bank has 424 branches in 73 countries-making it the seventh largest private bank in the world and the fourth largest in terms of country coverage. In London alone, всс has 45 branches. It is also one of the largest mobilisers of NRI funds, with deposits of Rs 236 crore.

For a bank, however, what matters is not size but the colour of its balance sheet. And there, BCC-which has a reputation for operating in the fast lane and has been called a "buccaneering bank"-has much to be ashamed of. In May, it had to make a loan loss provision of \$600 million (Rs 1,050 crore), mostly for Third World loans. This wiped out last year's operating profit of \$224 million and resulted in a record loss of \$498 million.

Poor performance isn't all that's plaguing BCC. Nine of its employees were among 80 accused by the US Attorney's office in October 1988 of laundering drug money. One client was General Manuel Noriega, the former Panamanian strongman, now under trial in the US. In India too, the bank has faced charges on more than one occasion. In 1986, its officials were charged with granting foreign exchange amounting to over \$232,000 under the Foreign Travel Scheme to fictitious passengers. The bank had to pay a fine and its then head fled the country despite a red alert. Later, in 1988, the bank was implicated in a travellers' cheque fraud.

Still, the large loan loss provision doesn't mean that the bank is about to collapse. It has found a saviour in the United Arab Emirates' ruling family of Shaikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nayhan, which increased its stake to 77 per cent, making BCC virtually a stateowned bank.

Simultaneously, BCC has set into motion a plan to cut costs. For starters, the corporate office moved from London to Abu Dhabi. The number of branches in London and elsewhere may be reduced. And last month, BCC completed a major profitability review, initiated training programmes, and appointed compliance officers to en-





The Bombay branch of BCC (above) and Shaikh al Nayhan: new lease?

sure that the bank's actions don't lead to charges of money-laundering.

Many of BCC's problems are the direct result of its unconventional functioning. The bank was set up by an India-born Pakistani banker, Agha Hasan Abedi, after Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's government nationalised his United Bank of Pakistan, Abedi cultivated the sheikhs of the United Arab Emirates, flush with oil funds, and provided them financial advice. When he offered to set up a bank, cocking a snook at American and British bankers, the sheikhs were happy to finance it. Abedi may have been a Pakistani but he had no hesitation in hiring Indians to important positions; 550 officials today are Indians.

But despite its professional staff, BCC continued to be run in the manner of what one corporate banker calls "a John Wayne bank". It depended on personal contacts in making loans; a client's balance sheet was only an aid, not the determining factor. Indian bankers also say BCC was highly parochial. "A bank of Muslims run for Muslims" is how one describes it.

Worse, a substantial part of the bank's international lending was in loans to private parties in Third World countries which lacked a legal system to enforce contracts. The results are to be seen in BCC's balance sheets.

The loan loss provision apart, however, BCC's performance hasn't been so bad. Last year, total assets grew 14 per cent from \$20,637 million to \$23,518 million. Deposits rose 18 per cent, by \$3,247 million. And loans and advances grew to \$10,235 million-an increase of 3 per cent.

The bank's Indian subsidiary hasn't done badly; it posted a profit of Rs 3 crore last year. Still, in terms of size, it is a small part of its parent's international operations and there were fears that it would come under the axe. Now, those fears have been set at rest, thanks to the Arab sheikh. Says B.N. Choudhuri, Bcc's chief executive officer in India: "We have been immeasurably strengthened. We now have a sovereign entity backing us." Not all Indian employees, however, may survive the cost-cutting operation. Says an Indian banker in Dubai: "I'm worried about the Indians. In the new scheme of things they might come way down in priority." That's a legitimate fear, since the bank expects to eliminate one in every seven jobs, of a worldwide strength of 14,028 drawn from 98 countries.

Nevertheless, if it succeeds in slashing jobs and ridding itself of its buccaneer image, BCC may still manage to wipe off the red ink.

There could yet be life after debt. SALIL TRIPATHI in Dubai and Bombay



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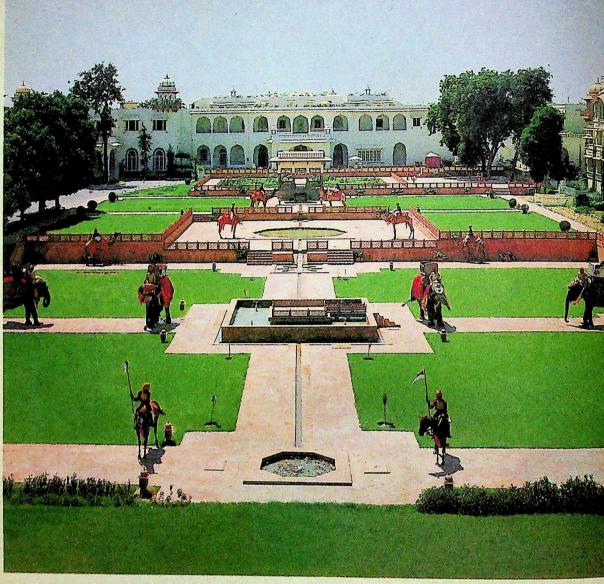


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Have the recipes for that delicious *Khana* been passed down the generations?

And were these elaborate gardens originally designed by Babur the dreamer?

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#### Soaring High

#### crips touch new peak

TOCK-MAPKETS and politics make strange bedfellows. The conventional wisdom is that if ew Delhi sneezes, Dalal Street in ombay catches a cold. Last fortnight, sthe political drama unfolded in New elhi, stock-market pundits had an pportunity to put this theory to test. Until Friday, July 12 when Om rakash Chautala was inducted as laryana chief minister, the 30-share lombay Stock Exchange (BSE) sensiive index seemed in vincible at 920.24. But over the next three days, as several ev members of the Union Cabinet and ater Prime Minister V.P. Singh himelf put in their papers, the markets posedived.

The (BSE) sensitive index plunged to 86.33 and the stock-market bull who wked like a permanent resident of Dalal Street showed signs of finally eing evicted. But the swift resolution the political crisis put stock prices ack again on the upward march. The



index touched an all-time high of 926.97 on Tuesday, July 17 and marketmen heaved a sigh of relief. By July 19 it had touched 945.

But as the mandarins in New Delhi were attempting to contain the political fall-out from the Chautala affair, BSE authorities were busy containing the spectacular rise of the ACC scrip. BSE authorities fixed a ceiling price of Rs 810 for ACC, its closing price for July 18 compared to Rs 730 only two days earlier. They also imposed a virtual freeze on fresh business in other hyperactive shares like Bombay Dyeing, Hoechst, Tata Power, Reliance, Baroda Rayon and Gujarat Ambuja Cement. In ACC, the authorities restricted purchase of shares for delivery to a mere 500 shares. And at settlement time fresh restrictions were announced pertaining to the carry-over of outstanding forward transactions.

Simultaneously the Calcutta Stock Exchange at the end of the July 18 settlement impounded entire payments which were due to buyers for forward purchase of shares. But these restrictive measures failed to stem the tide of rising share prices. ACC in Bombay, for example, was trading at a premium of Rs 40 over the fixed price of Rs 810. Century Industries gained over 200 points to move to Rs 3,825 and Century Enka gained 325 points to move to Rs 4.275. Other active shares were Grasim, Hindustan Aluminium, Hoechst, Bombay Dyeing and Hindustan Motors.

A significant development during the last fortnight was that shares in the "A" group which were free of trading restrictions were attracting attention. The question now is how the BSE authorities plan to cope with this fresh wave of buying. And there are signs that the buying fever is spreading to the "B" group or cash shares, which until now, were insulated from the bullish grip of the markets.

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CM	123.75	87.50	110.00	11.50 +*
Junion	66.50	45.50	64.00	10.00 +
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Ingersoll-Rand	255.00	190.00	255.00	22.50	+
ITC	96.00	48.75	94.50	2.50	÷
J.K. Synthetics	76.00	50.00	72.00	4.00	+
Kinetic Engineering		130.00	170.00	15.00	-
Kirloskar Cummins	90.00	65.00	79.00	4.00	+
KSB Pumps		175.00	200.00		
Larsen & Toubro		57.00	94.00		
Lipton		73.00	85.00		
LML Ltd.		15.00	32.50		
Madura Coats		100.50	127.00		
M&M		67.50	95.00		
Milk Food		115.00	185.00		
Motor Industries		780.00	970.00		
Mukand Ltd		127.00	141.00		
National Organic					
Nestle India		101.75	135.00		
Nirlon		13.00		2.50	
Orkay Silk Mills			25.50		
Peico Electronics		24.00	46.00		
Pfizer		72.50		nil	
Premier Auto		53.50			+
Raymond		70.00	90.00	nil	
Reckitt & Colman.		178.00	236.00		
Reliance Industries			97.50	4.50	
Siemens India		96.00	116.00	4.00	
Shaw Wallace		65.00	118.00		
Shriram Fibres	71.00	43.00	61.00	11.00	
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SPIC		50.75		4.50	
Tata Steel		103.25			
Telco					
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Voltag	107.00	63.00	104 00	14 00	16

#### WORLD VALUE OF RUPEE

COUNTRY	CURRENCY	UNIT	TT Selling Rates Rs	TT Buying Rates Rs
Australia	.Dollar	1	13.8578	13.7130
Austria	Shilling	.100	150.3138	149.6670
Bahrain	.Dinar	1	46.8247	45.7666
Bangladesh	.Taka	100	55.7437	54.3478
Canada	Dollar	1	15.2173	15.0652
Denmark				2.7737
Egypt	.Pound	1	6.6012	6.4893
France	.Franc	1	. 3.2310	3.1496
Hong Kong	.Dollar	1	2.2605	2.2386
Indonesia				0.9401
Iran				25.2559
Italy				1.4397
Japan				11.7786
Kenya				0.7480
Kuwait	Dinar	1	. 59.9292	57.9710
Malaysia	.Dollar	1	6.4909	6.4265
Mauritius	Rupee	1	1.1477	1.1293
Nepal	Rupee	1	0.6129	0.6049
Netherlands	Guilder	1	9.4557	9.3552
Pakistan	Rupee	1	0.8283	0.8165
Singapore	Dollar	1	9.6665	9.5688
Spain	Peseta	1	0.1745	0.1722
Sri Lanka	Rupee	1	0.4401	0.4353
Sweden	Kroner	1,	2.9452	2.9151
Switzerland	Franc	1	12.4243	12.2994
Tanzania	Shilling	1	0.0949	0.0915
Thailand	Baht	100	68.5909	67.1479
UK	Pound	1	31.8269	31.5956
USA	Dollar	1	17.5593	17.3913
UAE	Dirham	1	4.783	4.7336
USSR	Rouble	1	28.298	8 28 0053
W. Germany	Deutschma	rk . 1	10.822	5 10.5597

These rates were supplied by The Bank of Tokyo Limited. New Delhi and quoted between the banks on 19,7,90,

#### SPEECH DELIVERED BY A.BASU, CHAIRMAN, VST INDUSTRIES LIMITED. AT THE 59TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON JULY 20, 1990 AT HYDERABA methods a methods a method of the state of the state

#### A REVIEW OF THE YEAR

our Company has entered the Nineties with its income, net of excise duties, exceeding Rs. 100 crores for the first time. This represents a

growth of 43.6% over last year on an annualised basis. Your Company's products continue to flourish and indeed they have carved out a greater market share over the year. Pre-tax profits at a record

figure of Rs.11.78 crores represent a 100% increase on an annualised basis and the proposed dividend distribution of 30%, on an increased share capital, also represents a substantial improvement over last year.

I trust many of you here took the opportunity to invest in the shares of Bhadrachalam Paperboards Limited, or BPL as it is commonly called. Your Company was a co-promoter of BPL - a major supplier of board to your Company - and it has proved to be one of the most successful companies in the paper industry. However, in pursuance of a Central Government directive for disinvestment, your Company devised a novel scheme, with all the necessary permissions, to sell its holdings to its members and employees. The price was independently assessed by two reputed firms of chartered accountants and was below the prevailing market price. Not only was speculation in the shares of BPL and your Company avoided, but it also ensured the desirable long term stability of the BPL management through wide dispersal of that company's shares. So far, 6.27 lakh BPL shares have been disinvested, virtually fulfilling the terms of the Central Government directive. A net consideration of Rs.4.39 crores has been received for these shares and the final disinvestment of the balance 8.73 lakh shares will take place at an opportune time.

Once again, our home state has been devastated by a cyclone, and as a responsible citizen, your Company has participated in the

measures undertaken by the Government for the relief of the human misery and suffering in its wake. In the last twelve months, a new Government has been formed in the State and we welcome its pragmatic approach in the removal of Entry Tax in the State.

We have seen the old order changing smoothly and peacefully at the Centre also. On the whole, the Central Budget proposals have been welcomed by industry, despite the large budgetary deficit and the reluctance of the Government to tackle this grave problem. Amongst the other significant developments is the new Industrial Policy announced at the end of May, which should give further thrust to investment and growth. On the other hand, "The Participation of Workers in Management Bill, 1990' which will be debated at the next session of Parliament, may well dilute this process and I will dwell on this later in my speech.

Momentous changes have been witnessed abroad. Besides the collapse of apartheid, there have been the counter-revolutionary changes in the Eastern European bloc, with the possibility of total reunification of Germany. There will be undoubtedly even greater strains on our foreign exchange situation as opportunities emerge elsewhere for investment and trade for the developed countries.

A less dramatic, but nevertheless. significant development is the concern for thingent, and, environment and pollution, which recognises could lead national boundaries. In fact, India has been and sa the fifth most polluting nation in th

#### CHALLENGE AND RESPON tion at the QUALITY THROUGH PEOP, be the int

All these factors will have an impact on anisation your Company's operations, some sooner, songe on matter later, some dramatic, some peripheral. Like ess, including many other organisations, your Company also ife of the a approaches these challenges and changes the in a country the planning process. There is howe a significant difference. Your Company's beestakehold is that its goal of TOTAL QUALITY - Qualit consumer every aspect of its operations and interacti farmers, su with the outside world - can be achieved on ity, the Sta through the enthusiastic participation and inancial ins commitment of its people. Your Company's of course, t planning process, therefore, has sought to thave a rep combine planning and implementation throughts interes the constitution of a Planning Group, consistite a very vil of a mix of middle and senior managers y to give re representing all functions. This Group not on evel to ach draws up detailed plans and strategies, but builds into their normal operational responsibilities the monitoring and implementation of the Plan targets after these in tim have been approved by the Board of Directors articipation

Experience has shown that this process ballot or stimulates the development of managers and ed Union. the composition of the Planning Group keeps changing, the base also becomes larger. Participation in the planning process also has the inherent virtue of getting the commitmen operational managers to the self-imposed and competitively demanding objectives for improvement in operational efficiencies. An additional bonus is that qualitatively, the Platitiself has improved since this process began the

It is also implicit in the process of implementation, that employees further down the line get to appreciate the direction in white your Company is progressing. Their involvement of United States is sought not only through the recognised Unitomn but, where possible, also directly in such programmes as the modernisation of the Prim Manufacturing Department and the greening the factory environment, where models and plans are displayed in advance and suggested improvements are incorporated. This process was also followed for programmes on safety a lo balance work and product quality, with gratifying resultance work and product quality, with gratifying resultance with a safety a lower land to be a lower employees were invited to participate in the share disinvestment referred to earlier.

Your Company can take pride in the long the respo tradition of consultative processes it has built, brectors with its with its recognised Union and I am therefore somewhat sceptical of the legislative approach this of the being taken by the Government for worker participation in management, referred to early \$10 the '1 m my speech. The Bill contemplates participation at three levels - Shop Floor Could could be not, as he

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ment Councils and the Board of ent. While one may debate the RABA methods and processes for achieving tricipation, there can be no denying for communication and review at eless, levels, namely the shop floor and cern for thiment, and, managed correctly, such recognises could lead to greater efficiency, has been has been ent and satisfaction at work.

scepticism arises at the proposal for stephesian and the proposal for tion at the level of the 'Board of SPON ent' of a company. Although it would IPEOPobe the intention that the participation tion to the industrial establishment or ments owned by it', the highest council impact on tanisation has necessarily to deliberate sooner, son de on matters relating to every aspect of eral. Like ass, including its future businesses, and mpany also ite of the aspirations of all those who changes the in a company, in one way or another.

mpany's be<sub>e stak</sub>eholders in your Company are 'Y **– Qualit** consumers, shareholders, retailers, interacti larmers, suppliers, transporters, the chieved on ity, the State and Central Governments, pation and inancial institutions, creditors, etc. ompany's ofcourse, the employees. Should each bught to have a representative on the Board to ation throughts interests? While employees do up, consistize a very vital stakeholder segment, is it agers y to give representation at the very roup not on keel to achieve the objectives of Article gies, but the Constitution? It may be wise to dowly and start at the Shop Floor level and evolve participation at the s after thesevels in time, learning the pitfalls not of Directors articipation but the very process of ment of worker representatives either this process ballot or nomination by the nagers and sed Union.

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dit well-nigh impossible to reconcile in the lottice responsibility as a member of the party and that of his role as a live of the employee stakeholder. In worker arred to early a lotte in the control of the 'soft the 'nominee director', despite his es of Floor Country, as he falls victim to his 'watchdog'

It will be interesting to see the final shape that the Bill takes after debate in Parliament and the manner in which the Government gives effect to its provisions, not only in terms of the rules and schemes that will have to be framed, but also in respect of the timing of the application of its various provisions. Labour relations in India are, generally, somewhat delicate and tenuous and it is difficult to predict the forces that will be unleashed, which could adversely affect production and growth at a time when the country can least afford it.

#### QUALITY—THE ROAD AHEAD

Reverting again to the business of your Company, I am pleased to report that the thrust for Quality has been vigorously maintained on all fronts. The consumer is being given better value in terms of smoking satisfaction, plus better packaging. Freshness of stocks is being ensured where necessary through the opening of godowns at strategic locations, after careful study of cost to benefit.

Three years of relative shortage of sun-cured Natu Leaf, our principal raw material, was managed through careful inventory planning. Our Leaf Managers have found a more lasting solution, by developing a monsoon crop with excellent characteristics. This cash crop will benefit marginal farmers in the area, besides spreading your Company's inventory of leaf over the year.

Management Information Systems have reached a take-off stage. Your Company is in the process of trial runs on a latest generation mainframe computer, manufactured indigenously, the earlier hardware having outlived its useful life. Computerised systems now cover every aspect of operations, from computers in the leaf areas for quick payment to farmers by cheque, to reducing receivables from our main dealers. Totally integrated systems have been designed, with controls built in, so that your Company's books have been closed for the second year in succession within three weeks of the end of the financial year. Alas, this benefit has been neutralised by the statutory extension of the notice period from 21 to 42 days that has to be given from this year, for the closing of the register of members for the Annual General Meeting.

Further refinements are being made in the modernisation of the Primary Manufacturing Department, with on-line computer controls for better and consistent product quality. There has been a slight setback to the modernisation of the Secondary Department as a consequence of delay in the supply of equipment from indigenous sources. Your Company has been successful in persuading the Government to issue an import licence for two high speed LOGA cigarette making machines, with filter attachments, the first of which will be installed later in the year. These will represent a quantum jump in technology and will make your factory the most modern in this part of the world. It is then that the full benefits of the modern Primary Manufacturing Department will be realised. At present, tests are being conducted at the machine manufacturer's

premises in France, on the runnability of indigenous raw materials and plans are ready for the training of the operatives and technicians.

#### **EXPORTS**

As I stated earlier, the export market is highly competitive, and becoming even more so. This is particularly true for a product like cigarettes, where tariff barriers are generally extremely high. Nevertheless, your Company can



take pride in being India's largest exporter of cigarettes to hard currency markets. In addition to CHARMS KINGS which has created a niche for itself in the United Arab Emirates, your Company has recently launched KINGSTON MINI KINGS in the same area. All going well, cigarette exports should show an increase this year.

There is renewed interest today amongst overseas buyers in the varieties of Fire Cured, Light Soil Burley, Sun Cured Natu and other nontraditional varieties of tobacco developed by your Company and exports of unmanufactured tobacco, therefore should also improve this year.

Your Company has also taken steps to take up exports of non-traditional items, particularly those with an agricultural raw material base.

#### DIVERSIFICATION

Last year, the Chairman had stated that your Board was actively considering a possible diversification by your Company. I am now pleased to advise that your Board has in principle decided to diversify in areas which are in line with national priorities and where your Company's strengths, including financial resources, would be fully utilised. A short list of projects has been identified and a diversification cell has been set up to evaluate opportunities. Work is proceeding satisfactorily.

As you can see, the current year promises to be an exciting one and barring unforeseen circumstances, we can look forward to another good year.

This does not purport to be a report of the proceedings of the 59th Annual General Meeting.



Enterprise/VST/1306 AR



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... So I joined Datapro. And became a 'Masterpro' in computers."

Right from my college days, I was clear about two things. One, a fast-growth career is not possible without good qualifications.

And two, a career in computers was what I wanted.

The problem was, where to get the right qualifications? That's when I found out about the most wanted people in the computer industry.

The Master professionals. Masterpros from Datapro.

It's now been almost a year since I left Datapro. Recently I got my first increment. A fat one. And my boss says I have all the makings of a System

If you're looking for a good career in computers, my advice is become a Masterpro at Datapro.

They have the experience of building over 35,000 successful Masterpros. Who now enjoy fast- growth careers

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53 Centres

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981-82 = 1 Current Trend 10.10% F

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Money Supply

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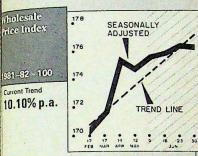
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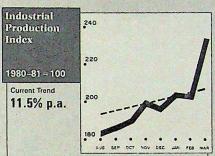
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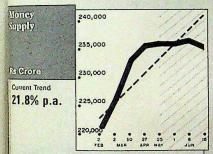
Overall a good fortnight for the economy, with industrial output picking up. hare prices booming and stable inflation. Industry bounced back from its revious trough. In particular, manufacturing output grew sharply—reinforcng the belief that manufacturing growth is crucial for overall industrial growth. sutelectricity generation was stagnant and credit increased marginally. In order o sustain industrial growth, it is important to remove such supply bottlenecks. All data are seasonally adjusted. Current trends are computed on the basis of six nonths' (weekly data) or one-and-a-half years' (monthly data) figures.



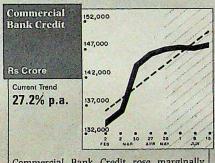
The wholesale price index remained stable over the last fortnight-inflation seems to be under control.



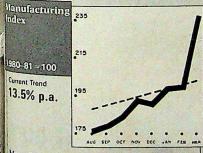
Industrial production picked up substantially over the last fortnight-this was a very promising sign.



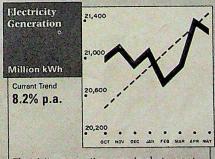
Money supply once again contracted after its previous expansion-a reaction to inflationary pressure.



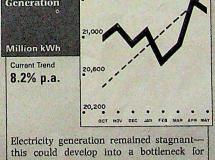
Commercial Bank Credit rose marginally which was certainly a very good signal to industry.



Manufacturing output showed a marked improvement leading to overall improvement in Industrial production.



industry.

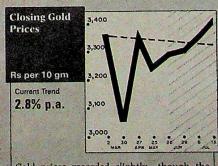


Share Price odex 470 <sup>984</sup>-85≈100 430 Current Trend 22.5% p.a.

the share market climbed famatically during the last fortnight after a yeady rise.

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Gold prices recorded slightly-though the trend in the last six months has been negative.

#### WHOLESALE PRICES

Growth of items in the 2nd fortnight of June 1990

	Growth
Onions	17.09
Linseed Oil	
Oranges	13.35
Mustard Oil	10.67
Coffee	9.23
Bolts & Nuts	
Rape & Mustard Seeds	7.85
Linseed	7.18
Cotton Seeds	7.05
Gur	6.80
Utensils	
Groundnut Oil	6.27
Rubber	5.97
Groundnut Seeds	4.74
Copra	4.39
Cotton Raw	4.11
Groundnut Oilcake	4.02
Paper	3.95
Gram	3.69
Vanaspati	
Bananas	2.45
Rice	2.32
Fish	2.20
Arhar	2.13
Coconut Oil	2.03
Eggs	1.98
Jowar	
Dry Cells	
Cement	
Masoor	
Barley	
Wheat	
Betel-Nuts	
Mining Machinery	
Hides	
Copper & Alloys	
Handloom & Powerloom Products	
Electricity	
Electrical Motors	
Ragi	
Maize	
Tobacco Raw	
Zinc	
Atta	
Moong	
Tractors	
Bajra	
Dajta	

Of the 134 series considered, 115 of them with a total weight of 70.258 had a non-negative rate of growth and 19 of them with a total weight of 14.594 had a negative rate of growth.

SELECTED INDICATORS	0
Cool 1990	1989
Coal Thousand Tonnes, May 15400	14750
Saleable Steel	
Thousand Tonnes, May, 600.8	641.0
Cement	
Thousand Tonnes, May3895	3910
Fertilisers	
Thousand Tonnes, May	592.7
Electricity Total	
Million kWh21281	19823

Compiled by THE POLICY GROUP

#### RETAILERS DEPARTMENTAL STORES CO-OPERATIVE STORES & SUPER BAZARS

#### MAY SWITCH OVER TO BETTER PRICING WITH

#### Monarch Marking

LABELLING SYSTEMS

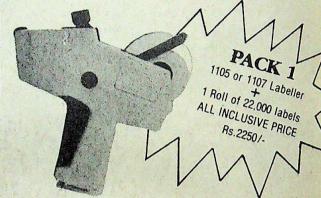
Its time to switch over to a better system for marking your merchandise with Monarch Marking Systems. Two exquisite models, Pricing and Pricing Plus.

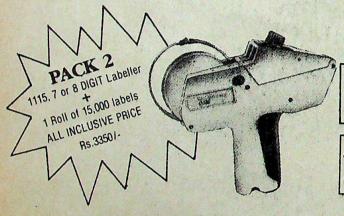
#### PRICING 1105/1107

With one line of 8 or 7 characters, these models of labellers help pricing, repricing and coding merchandise. The labels are inexpensive and compatible to all items requiring labels.

€ 1235.00

€ 287.65





25/6/90

€283.40

A 2345678

€ 6345.00

#### PRICING PLUS 1115

Pricing Plus model offers increased capabilities with two lines of printing. The first line is programmed to print information like Code, Stock no. Quantity, Date, Department, Season etc., while the second line provides information on price.

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DIA-PAKISTAN

#### Volley of Words

#### ontact is resumed, but talks lead nowhere

ARRING exceptional whiffs of fresh air, such as the post-saarc Jsummit Rajiv-Benazir bonhonie, the talks between India and Pakitan have an uncanny habit of degenrating into an obstinate reiteration of tale, rival rhetoric. Thus it came as no urprise when last fortnight the forign secretaries of the two countries net in Islamabad and repeated old rguments and assertions, giving no warter. And yet, at the end of two days stalking both sides claimed to have made "some progress".

The "progress" lies, if at all, in the act that the two sides have resumed alking. Official contact had broken lown after the disastrous April meetng between Indian External Affairs linister Inder Kumar Gujral and his Pakistani counterpart Sahibzada Yaqub Khan in New York. The meetng ended with the foreign ministers making bellicose statements and also et in motion feverish international liplomatic activity, spearheaded by he Americans. Now, both sides admit hat the foreign secretaries' meeting lad been arranged under internaional pressure.

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India's initiative in arranging anhile the other round of talks, though there was no hope of breaking fresh ground, was because of the growing feeling in South Block that Pakistan was taking advanage of the absence of diplomatic conact. Over the past two months akistan's international diplomatic tive was three-pronged: India is refusing to tackle the main problem—the <sup>late</sup> of Kashmir, India is preparing for war, and India is not even willing to alk reasonably.

"The exaggerated fears of war among the international community, Particularly the US, are motivated by he Pakistanis as they think this is the est way to get the world powers hterested in our affairs," says a top inistry of External Affairs (MEA) offi-Gal. The secretary-level talks, MEA cials felt, would take the sting of Pakistani propaganda and also weer its pitch in the Islamic world. he talks, thus, were more of a tacti-

exercise with the aim, at best, peripheral gains. At the very outset, Foreign Secretary Muchkund Dubey told the Pakistanis that India considered war an anachronism at a time when walls are crumbling all over the world. But very often, the two sides talked on entirely different wavelengths. India underlined the need for the acceptance of its seven-point confidence building measures (CBMs) to reduce tensions. The accent was on "verifiable" CBMs-like

Partition which should be duly completed now by transferring the state to Pakistan". Dubey's gentle rejoinder was that any pretensions of "finishing the unfinished business of Partition could have disastrous consequences".

During the meeting with Benazir Bhutto the Indian delegation pointed out the deterioration in bilateral relations since the heady, post-saarc days, and asked the Pakistan prime minister to pause and reflect on what had gone wrong. Dubey said that the subcontinent had come to this pass today because Pakistan had violated the norms governing relations between sovereign states. Benazir stoutly denied the charges.



the denunciation of terrorism in Punjab and Kashmir by Pakistani leaders, the closure of Kashmir funds by the Pakistan Government, and the extradition of Sikh and Kashmiri "fugitives" known to be in Pakistan.

The Pakistani delegation however felt it was too early to think in terms of these measures and continued to harp on the military situation on the border. It wanted the withdrawal of the Indian troops to peacetime locations. India's reply was that the forward deployment of troops had been necessitated by the situation created by Pakistan and it was premature to talk about redeployment.

For the Indian delegation it was also a probing mission to see who commands how much power in the complicated Pakistani political scenario and South Block now seems to feel that President Ghulam Ishaq Khan is more in control than Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Dubey is believed to have had a cutting exchange with him, when Khan told him that "Kashmir was a part of the unfinished business of Ahmed (left) and Dubey at the talks

The only change South Block noticed was that rather than an outright denial of all charges of abetting terrorism. Pakistan was sometimes on the defensive, asking for suggestions on what could be done. The Pakistanis said that they wanted to stop infiltration into Kashmir but it was not possible for them to shoot the Kashmiris crossing the border. They pointed out that it was a known fact that the terrorists were buying their arsenal at the flourishing arms bazaars on the Frontier, India, in turn, reminded the Pakistanis of the "doctrine of responsibility of a State".

Much of the same will perhaps be repeated at the next round of talks to be held shortly in New Delhi. But even as the diplomats of the two countries firmly stick to their guns, just the continuation of discussions may help in lowering the temperatures among soldiers standing muzzle to muzzle along a contentious frontier.

-SHEKHAR GUPTA

AIRBUS A 320

#### No Take Off

#### Reinduction in the doldrums

THE fate of the Airbus A 320 and that of Civil Aviation Minister Arif Mohammed Khan seem to be following the same flight path. Barely four days after a special A 320 flight flew Khan, members of the parliamentary consultative committee and journalists to Hyderabad, the Civil Aviation Ministry abruptly suspended the envisaged resumption of Airbus flights, obviously due to the political crisis and Khan's resignation.

That a headless Indian Airlines (IA) and the ill-starred Airbus are totally dependent on the cabinet's whims-is



Arif at end of the special flight

now patently obvious. In fact, the decision to suspend the Airbus once again was made despite the fact that the first flight had been overbooked by nearly 87 seats, a clear reflection of the confidence placed in the aircraft by passengers.

Defending the decision, a senior Civil Aviation Ministry official said nonchalantly: "The aircraft have been grounded for five months. A few days more will not make any difference.

The airline, however, may have used the opportunity to gain time to gear up for reinduction. But the 140odd A 320 pilots who are members of the Indian Commercial Pilots' Association (ICPA) have threatened that they may not attend the refresher course recommended by the Ramdas Committee until certain flaws in the training plan are removed.

Their argument: the Line Oriented Flying Training (LOFT) should be used instead of the five 'route checks' recommended for all A 320 pilots by the Ramdas Committee. A route check means that a pilot being checked flies the aircraft while the examiner pilot watches him without giving any assistance or guidance while in LOFT, he also gives suggestions. Incidentally, the crew of the ill-fated A 320 which crashed at Bangalore were also carrying out a route check.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), in fact, insists on one route check if a pilot has not been flying for 30 days. ICPA's General Secretary Captain R.N. Singh says: "Five route checks are not required under the law. By doing so they are challenging our professionalism.

Countering ICPA's argument, IA

officials say that DGCA just lays the minimum norms, while IA can ask its pilots to improve on these. Asserts Captain S.T. Deo, director training, IA: "To check the pilot's proficiency should I give him four lectures and one examination or five examinations?'

If the ICPA members decide to stay away from the refresher course over this issue, the airline will have just 12 executive pilots to reinduct the 14 grounded aircraft.

Ironically, the performance of the airline has

improved without the A 320s. In May this year, with 10 Airbus A 300s and 24 Boeing 737s, the passenger load factor on the 1A network shot up to 82 per cent. The average never topped 71 per cent when the A 320s were in operation. Some sectors, such as the Bombay-Delhi and Bombay-Cochin even notched up a load factor of 100 per cent. 1A claims to be making a profit on its present operating fleet, even though it is making a loss on the grounded A 320s.

The over-use of the present IA fleet is causing concern in the Civil Aviation Ministry. Says Aviation Secretary A.V. Ganesan: "At present we are virtually flogging the 1A fleet." The reinduction of the A320s will ease some pressure off the existing aircraft. But with the ministry and the Airbus subject to Khan's whims and fancies, when that will happen is anybody's guess.

W.P.S.SIDHU

TYPHOID

#### Killer Mode

#### Drugs prove ineffective

THE alarm bells are ringing in Delhi. Parents are getting urgent calls from their doctors advising vaccination of children against tvphoid. While the disease regularly breaks around monsoon, this year its extent and nature are wreaking havoc.

Alarmingly, conventional therapy isn't working. Countrywide reports acknowledge the inability of standard drugs to control the disease caused by water-borne bacteria which is suspected this year to have originated from Calcutta and then travelled westwards. Traditionally effective drugs like chloromycetin, ampicillin. amoxycillin and cotrimoxazol are suddenly proving useless.

Dr Arvind Taneja, secretary of the Indian Academy of Paediatrics thinks the bacteria has changed its character in order to immunise itself to traditional medicines. Misuse of antibiotics is suspected to be a prime culprit. For example, say doctors, chlorostep is recommended for diarrhoea though it is chlorine-based and can cause resistance to typhoid-combating drugs.

The grim option left open is expensive drugs, administered intravenously, and hence requiring hospitalisation. Worse, some of these drugs, like quinotones, cause specific toxicity in children. Ciprobid, liberally prescribed as it can be given orally, is toxic and hasn't been cleared by the Drug Controller of India.

The disease is rampant during monsoons, breaking out in slum areas. resettlement colonies and other places with inadequate drainage and unsafe water supply. Inoculation seems to be the only short-term solution available. Doctors are recommending it even though the efficacy of the currently available vaccine is only 60 to 65 per cent and it causes systemic reactions like high fever and body aches.

The Government is now being asked to allow either import or the indigenous production of oral typhoid vaccine which though used in the West has been under trial here since 1985. But equally important are the provision of clean drinking water, public education on sanitation and awareness among doctors about the hazards of misuse of antibiotics if typhoid is to be controlled. —SHARMILA CHANDRA

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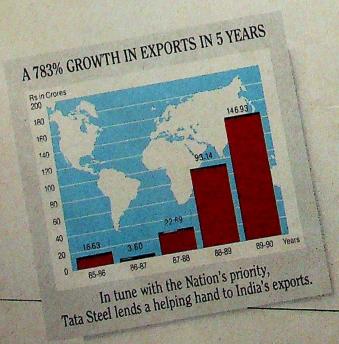
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the story of Tata Stere again

export venture is.

ing its ex Operating in a developing coul the we like India where foreign exchange future. big crunch and hard currency earnir national priority, Tata Steel madicel Exp determined bid to establish a long to quality leadership for the Company sed the country in the global market.

In six years, Tata Steel has gross into one of the country's larg exporters with a turnover of Rsl crore and with markets in the Usterials Japan, Australia, China, New Zealar Bangladesh, Taiwan, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egy Turkey, West Germany and oth countries. In spite of major imports equipment and raw materials for on-going modernisation drive, Tidities Steel is today a nett exporter.



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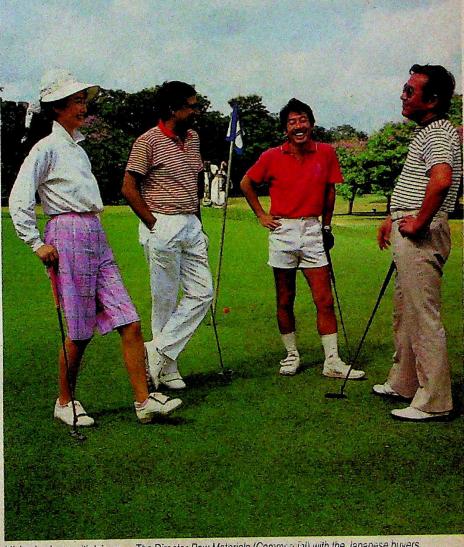
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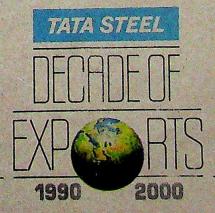
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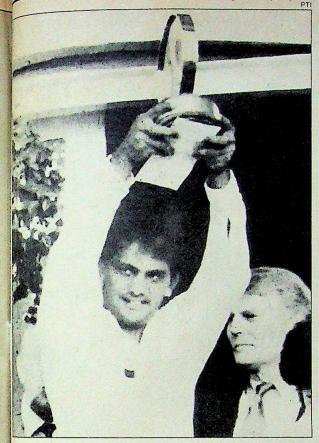
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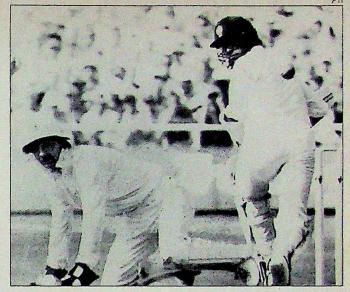
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Azharuddin with Texaco Trophy; and (above) Manjrekar: leading the charge

#### A Promising Start

#### Underdog Indian team has its first taste of success

HE Indians can bat a bit, can't they?" was the slightly condescending question being aired by most British commentators at the start of last fortnight's Texaco series between India and England. In the event, it was more than just a bit. For, it was ultimately the greening of the batting line-up that saw India sweep <sup>the</sup> two-match Texaco one-day series.

Leading the charge brilliantly was Azharuddin, who has emerged from he enigmatic personality he had been leduced to. Retaining the captaincy has revealed a new cricketer and tem-Pered his genius. Proof of that came at reds, and again at Nottingham. His is at Leeds came off 50 balls and his nemorable 63 at Nottingham from Ast 44. And not one false note marred lls symphony of strokes.

His performance ensured that the de can now look up to him. It's a side at, according to Raj Singh, chairman the Selection Committee, is beginng to believe in itself. Says he: "In the they were failing to get it right at crucial time." It's clear that the talent is finally maturing. For too long Indian cricket had grabbed copyright on so-near-and-yet-so-far situations. But now they seem to have realised that the kamikaze approach may win them friends but not matches. They have tempered their collective talent and a new breed of heroes is emerging.

One of them, an unlikely candidate when the tour began, is Anil Kumble, 20, the leg spinner from Karnataka. Kumble is not a big spinner of the ball. He rolls it through, but his height allows him to get a lot of bounce. Says B.S. Bedi, the team manager: "He's quick through the air and very accurate. His greatest strength is his temperament: very cool."

With his academic looks, Kumble is unlikely to become a pin-up boy. That place seems reserved for 17-year-old Sachin Tendulkar, dubbed 'Maradona' by the British press. Tendulkar has been in tremendous form and, as he showed in a warm-up game against Derbyshire, is beginning to temper his almost uncontrollable talent with caution. Yet, at Nottingham, he played a commando-like innings with strokes of the highest class.

But clearly he's nowhere near being a second Gavaskar, simply because their approaches are so unrelated. The weight of that epithet falls on Sanjay Manjrekar. In technical terms, he was probably the purest on either side and it will be fascinating to watch him in the Tests. Importantly, old warhorse Dilip Vengsarkar, has also returned to form.

But the bowling causes concern. In the lead-up games, and at Nottingham, it seemed to lack the cutting edge. One reason could be a combination of the wicket and the weather. It's been unusually hot in England and this has hampered movement in the air. Another reason could be the kind of balls used. According to Jimmy Amarnath, currently in Yorkshire: "The balls used this year have a depressed seam unlike last year's that swung all over the place." As a result, even a good mover of the ball like Manoj Prabhakar is having trouble. Especially since India seem to be depending so much on him now. As for Kapil Dev, he's clearly seen happier days. Most disturbing is his apparent lack of excitement and energy, a Kapil hallmark.

England, on the other hand, entered this series on a high and must remain favourites simply because India don't seem to have the attack to bowl out an international side twice. Also with the Test centres likely to have greener wickets, the England seam attack, spearheaded by Devon Malcolm, and the impressive Angus Fraser, may have things its own way.

But till then the Indians can savour their finest one-day performance since winning the World Championship of Cricket in Australia in 1985.

-HARSHA BHOGLE in the UK

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OR the little maharaja of Indian chess, it was yet another eather in an already wellplumed cap. Last fortnight, India's great chesshope, 20-year-old Vishwanathan Anand, became the first Indian and only the second Asian to ualify for the prestigious Candidates Round which leads to the world championship. At the qualilying inter-zonals, Anand checkmated an opposition comprising 55 grandmasters to achieve the disfinction. "It was a tough field. Thirty of the world's top players were there but Iwasn't unduly worried," says the prodigy.

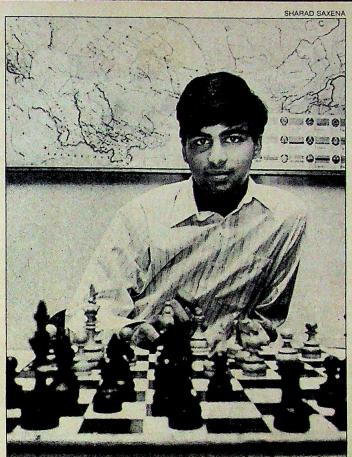
championship The didn't quite take the course Anand had chalked out for himself. But in the end there was some sort of order to the way in which he won. The 'Lightning Kid', as he is known in chess circles due to the speed with which he plays, won the first two rounds, lost the next two, drew the bllowing three to arrive at the seventh round against Margai Petersson of Iceland. That proved a

key game. Anand's victory over him proved a great morale booster, for Petersson had been playing well.

Anand drew the next two rounds without much difficulty. His 10th found opponent was French hope Joel lautier, who Anand beat in a hard lought contest. In the 11th round Anand was pitted against Anthony Miles of England. At that stage there were 14 players in contention and Anand was ahead of four. Miles played ambitiously at one point, and then addenly changed his strategy to play for a draw. This reduced Miles to a passive position and he had to, in Anand's words, "endure whatever forture I wanted to inflict on him."

Next came the match which was by the young grandmaster the most fucial, against Mikhail Gurevich, the soviet grandmaster. Anand won in 38 flowers. At that stage things were still fluid. Anand had to play to win in the to keep his qualifying chances from the was still a 35 per cent flowsibility of him not qualifying. But

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VISHWANATHAN ANAND

#### **Grand Moves**

#### Young master hits top league

fortunately for him and unfortunately for Gurevich, Anand played one of his best games. Qualification was a mere formality from here on. All he needed now was a draw against Soviet grandmaster, Vassily Ivanchuk. A feat he accomplished in 12 moves. The night he beat Gurevich, Anand called his parents in Madras from Manila. He was euphoric. "I was pretty excited that day. I don't quite remember what they said," he recalls.

Anand's strategy was quite simple: to play the first seven or eight rounds as well as possible, and wait for the field to telescope, and if he was still in the race, then gear up to mount a serious challenge. As it happened, he was able to put on his best display. A universal player capable of playing both positional and tactical chess with equal finesse, his brilliance emerges mostly in middle-game play. Unlike many youngsters who play very fast initially and later slow down and suffer chronic time-trouble, Anand rarely takes an hour to knock down his opponents.

There have been instances when he has taken only 15 minutes to make all his moves while his opponents have struggled for the stipulated two hours.

The inter-zonals did mean more pressure than usual. The young grandmaster was carrying the nation with him, hopefully to Brazil for the Candidates. But he didn't let that affect his exuberant style of play. Says he: "I had to curb my adventurous spirit a bit but I didn't play extraordinarily slower than usual."

Anand, along with 11 other qualifiers plus the two losing semi-finalists and runners-up of the Candidates final, will now play on a knock-out basis. The seven winners will be joined by the loser of the Kasparov-Karpov title clash. The winner of the Candidates final (decided by knock-outs) challenges the world champion in a best of 22 game.

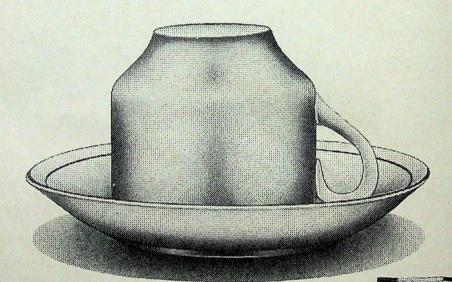
"I am not thinking about the Candidates yet," says Anand, who is recovering from a mild fever back home at Madras. After the recent tension

and euphoria he wants to relax for a bit. Nor is he allowing his achievement to go to his head. He is ecstatic about the Candidates, but still wants to keep at his tournament chess.

In a game traditionally dominated by the Europeans, Anand made inroads pretty early in life. At 13, he defeated the legendary Manuel Aaron for the first time. At 15, he became the youngest Asian to win the international master's title. And at 17, he created ripples in the Indian sportworld when he became the first Asian to bag the world junior chess championship, earning with it the title of grandmaster.

Anand has since inched his way to the top bracket with every match. He is currently ranked 14th in the world. Before the Candidates qualifier, he was ranked 18th. "My goal is to break into the top 10 and make it to number two. And then I'll think about being number one," he says. The grandmaster evidently has his moves perfectly planned out.

—KAVITHA SHETTY



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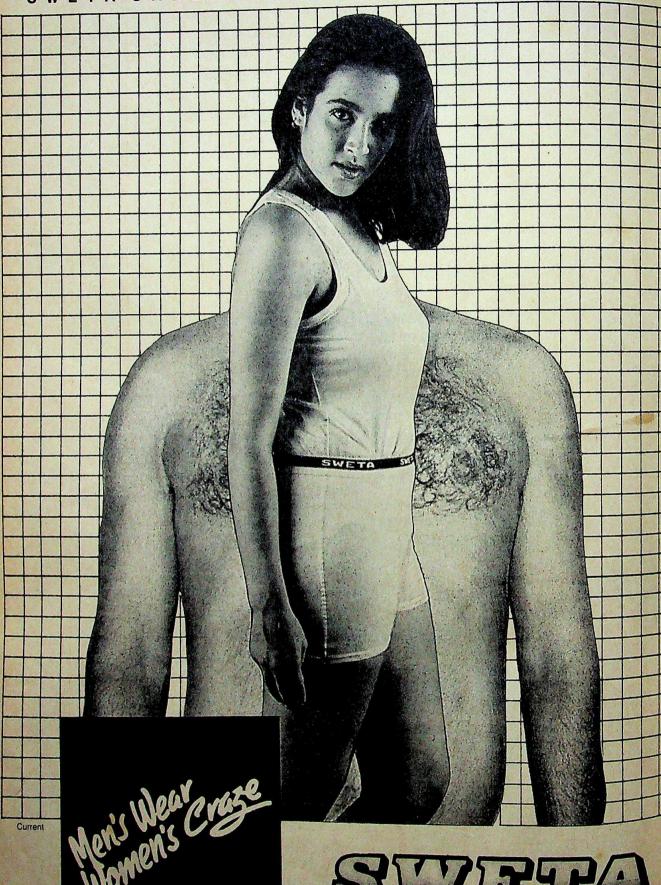
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ASHMIR is Mandi House's latest preoccupation, but with difference. The "healing ouch" used in Punjab has een replaced by a tworonged strategy in Kashnir. "We will alternate

he soft with the hard," explained a senior bureaucrat in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B). said I&B Minister P. Upendra: "We want the Kashmiris to know that Pakistan is not exactly heaven." Hence, the potage of the killing fields of Karachi is aired regularly on Doordarshan.

But first the soft option. Gul Gulshan Gulfam, the TV series which began last DOORDARSHAN

#### The New Focus

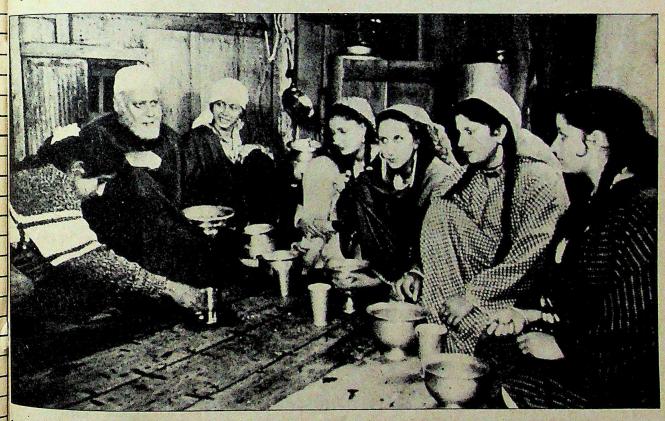
#### Mandi House hardsells Kashmir

directed by Chetan Anand. The opening episode reconstructs the efforts of Major Sharma and his Kumaon Regiment shortly after Independence to keep the Srinagar airport open until the planes from Delhi arrive. They all die melodramatically fighting the invading hordes of qabaelis (tribesmen). Strangely enough, the past eerily resembles the troubled present: the men stan's claims to speak for Muslims of the subcontinent ring hollow: those who went in 1947 are still being hacked to death," says an official in the Ministry of External Affairs.

Some of the efforts of the special cell to counter Pakistani

propaganda on Kashmir may actually have worked. A fascimile of an edit in the Pakistani paper Nation last month praising the efficacy of "India's media war on Pakistan" can be found on many important desks in South Block and Shastri Bhavan.

The propaganda machine may be hurtling through but eventually the



ortnight is the tale of a wise old houseboat owner and his three sons. Almost like an allegory, the series drected by Ved Rahi shows how the World of shikaras turned upside down when tourists stopped coming: it could also be about Kashmir itself. Of course, the series the bad times have been Gaused by the "rising waters in the runjab" cutting them off from the rest Withe world. Each son reacts differently the changing circumstances: the opts for status quo like his father, he second dreams of apple orchards, the third with blow-dried hair and ather jacket is the sharpie-on-thehake gearing up for a new world.

Kashmir crops up again, soft focus, Param Vir Chakra, the new serial Still from TV series Gul Gulshan Gulfam: paradise lost

from across the passes are still heading this way.

Going "soft" means documentaries and variations on Mera Bharat Mahan by private producers and advertising agencies. Says a senior I&B bureaucrat: "We want to remind the Kashmiris of their tolerant character, their basic sufi nature.'

Doordarshan, though, isn't ready to drop its hard face, for example Dehshat, the crude documentary on Kashmir. The main thrust remains the electronic war with Pakistan: images of Mohajir killings in Sind fill the small screen. "We want to show that Pakitruth is more effective. Nalini Singh's Aaj ka Kashmir or Saeed Mirza's sensitive film on Kashmir for PTI-TV-the latter was rejected by Doordarshancut through the cant to the human element. Not only does Mirza's film reveal the sense of hurt of the average Kashmiri, it gives a glimmer of what went wrong. "I am not against Hindustan, but keep us with love," says a young man interviewed on the street.

Images of present-day Kashmir may have been nudged out of the small screen but so crucial is it to Doordarshan, off-screen, that a newsreader talking about 4,000 people being tortured, and hundreds killed said Kashmir, instead of Karachi. A Freudian slip? -MADHU JAIN



Ramesh and Usha Sharma are a happily married couple. They are both working in separate firms. One day Ramesh gets a call in office from Usha





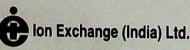




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#### irthday bashes turn vildly ostentatious

OCKETS whizz into the air and explode into a thousand colourful fragments. Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck trundle past followed by a host of shrieking fans.

obin Hood greets King Arthur while driar Tuck stands on the side. Mamnoth mounds of creamy cake and follops of ice-cream are passed round. Horse-drawn carriages relete with liveried trainers gallop by a frenetic pace. A huge waterfall ascades down only to be drowned by the sound of a live band.

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Scenes from a new Hollywood lock-buster? No. just your everyday liddy party in Delhi.

Clearly, birthday parties for chilren today are no longer kid stuff.
he capital's glitterati is now throwig birthday bashes for babies on a
rander scale and in an increasingly
amboyant manner. Whether it's on
a exclusive farm in Gurgaon, a
lansion in ritzy Friends Colony, a
ve-star hotel or at Appu Ghar—
hdia's Disneyland—the buzzword is
pulence.

One recent ghazal party at the laurya Sheraton for a new-born had guest list of 350 people. The singer's a part, the party cost a tidy Rs 1.5 kh, with *chandi ka chakras* handed ut as return-presents. Admits Gita hanna, banquet manager at the lotel: "Hotel parties have become lawdier, much more expensive and loreasingly theatrical."

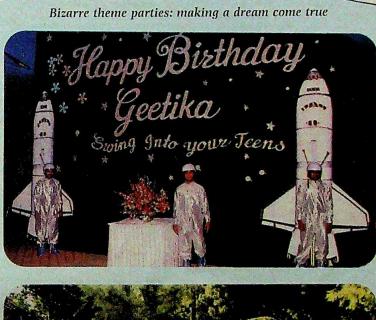
It is obvious that kiddy parties are letting more and more ostentatious the to rising standards of living, aposure to the West through videos and increasing consumerism. And with big money pouring into the little forld, hotels are having a field day acreating people's fantasies.

On the kiddy party circuit, theme arties are the rage. You could be wishna one day, Cinderella the next, deven a pretty Alice in Wonderdas would have done Lewis Car-

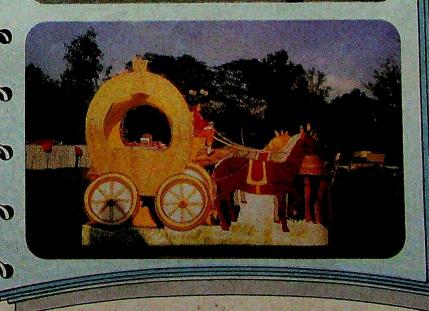
roll proud. High on the popularity charts are the jungle party, replete with cascading waterfalls and animals, the Hawaiian experience, with thatched huts and lots of flowered garlands and He-man or Spiderman parties where masks and nets figure prominently. Theme parties have been popular since the early '80s, but as

Sanjeev Mehra, sales manager of Delhi's Allied Store, a children's speciality shop, says: "Now people are coming up with really imaginative ideas." And the cost of being imaginative could range from Rs 15,000 to a staggering Rs 40,000.

One such party held recently had all the boys dressed up as Mickey







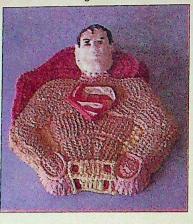
and the girls as Minnie Mouse. The cake, plates, balloons, and takehome presents (Minnie and Mickey mouse Tshirts) all reflected the theme. All the effects and the presents were specially ordered from abroad.

Hotels often resort to other gimmicks while targeting the tots. An example: the Maurya Sheraton has as its mascot two St Bernards— Bernie and Bertie—who

can mime a hello and *namaste*. Kiddy parties have also gone hi-tech—at a high cost. For instance, there was the 'moonwalk party'—where a 40 ft by 30 ft moon-shaped balloon was brought from Bombay to Delhi for a whopping Rs 20.000. And then there was the space age party which cost Rs 40,000.

It's not just kids who are working themselves into a frenzy over birthday parties. Equally enthusiastic are the parents. Both parents and youngsters delve into glossies like *People* magazine or *Hello* to come up with new ideas. They storm video shops for the latest craze or







Holiday

Birthday cakes in outlandish shapes and sizes: one-upmansip

ring uprelatives living abroad to keep up with 'the latest' in parties.

B

ARENTS try to be one-up in everything—from cuisine to decor. For instance. Umesh Aggarwal of the Bengali Pastry Shop in Bengali Market, is con-

stantly asked to make different and innovative cakes while Rashmi Khattar of Truffles and Frills, a pastry shop in Maharani Bagh, says she is inundated with requests to make cakes that "have never been made before and will never

be made again". People ask for money elephant cake for an elephant the and claparty or a bathtub cake for a pool pa more at That's not all. There's even a Snow ts—jump and the Seven Dwarves cake. a Drawagon. the cake. a kite cake, a Humpty-Dun extens cake, a guitar cake and a fairy cakome, when

And if the cuisine for the kiddy per is precise haute so is the couture. Frills and a greater in varying shades vie for attention vively enkiddy bow-ties and designer jeards. Also Mostly it's a matter of ostentation rated box—has are degrees of display. Says Antebags, trechatterjee, a public relations officer. At a

If it ain't Wrangler, its just a dude in shid elenir







Holiday Inn: "The nouveau riche ppies tend to go overboard, while ask ford money or educated types have hant the and classier parties."

a pool pa more and more children—and a Snow<sub>its</sub>—jump onto the kiddy party e. a Dra<sub>tragon</sub>, the kiddy party is becompty-Dur<sub>in</sub> extension of the kitty party airy cakome, where the need to outdo one kiddy pier is predominant. So fads vie to rills and a greater impact. The latest is tention vively embossed designer invitagner jeards. Also, the take-home gifts of ation rate lay—the little chocolate bar or pre too the box—have been replaced by excepts of the control of

party—with waiters dressed up like pirates and sailors—the take-home presents were pure silver treasure chests filled with Treasure Island figure chocolates ordered from abroad.



PECIAL attention is paid to decor. The traditional streamers and balloons don't generate the same enthusiasm. Colours and lights are used for dramatic

effect. The more exaggerated, the better. Flowers are used in abundance. Then there's the confetti, in varying shapes and sizes. Also popular are life-size cutouts to go with the theme.

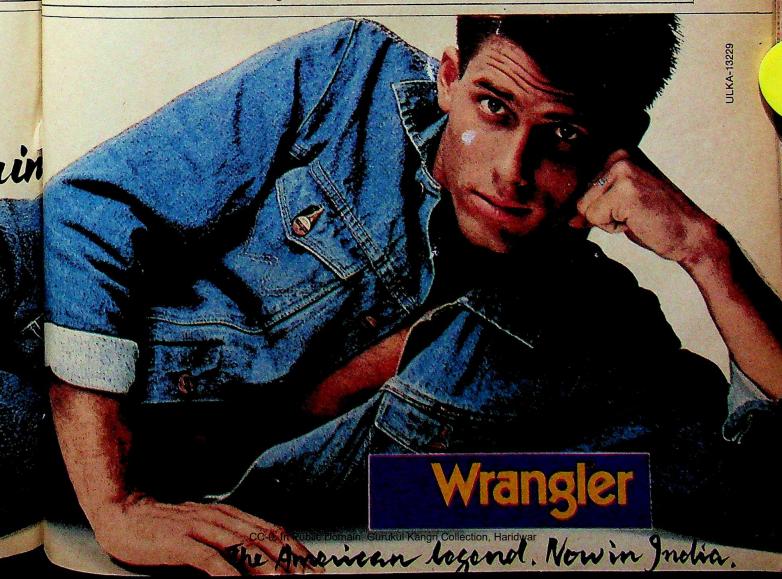
Children's parties, it is obvious, have lost the old fun ethic. Children tend to get lost in the exhibitionism, with parents basically using a birthday as an excuse to have a party. And mothers go out of their way to impress the maids because they know they are the ones who will carry details of the party back to the parents. Thus maids are plied with food and better looked after than the

kids for whom the party is meant.

Since organising these parties requires a tremendous amount of time and energy, there are already entrepreneurs preparing to cash in on the kiddy party boom. Says Pooja Bahadur, who plans to start a business in kiddy parties: "I could hit a gold mine in this business."

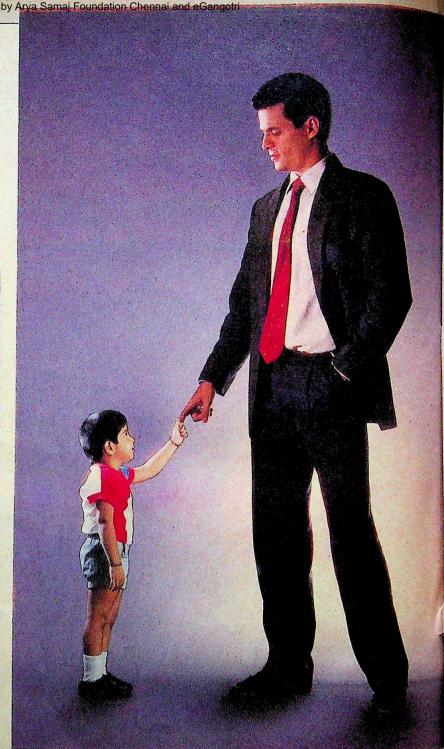
And that's not hard to believe. Because kiddy parties are merely the tip of the iceberg. Waiting in the wings are a host of other bizarre parties: naming ceremony, birth ceremony, going-to-college party, vacation party, passed-inexams party, getting-admission party. Or perhaps a just-feel-like-having-aparty party.

—KUSUM SAWHNEY



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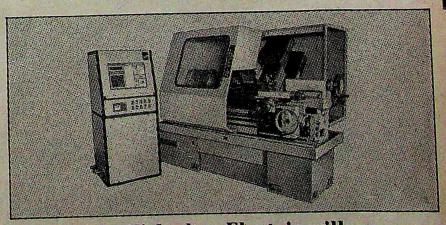
industry and to start manufactur-

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RAJASTHAN

# Rain Games

#### Betting on the monsoon

TENERALLY when the rain clouds come rumbling in from the horizon people dash indoors. But in Bikaner the smell of rain sends most people on a frenzied run to the Gali Chai Bati in Bada Bazaar. Not to experience the ecstasy of raindrops falling on their heads. But to join the thrilling betting on rain which dominates the monsoon season in this desert-dry region of north Rajasthan.

Even though it is illegal the betting thrives, attracting hundreds of men who collect there at the slightest hint of drizzle, the faintest flash of lightning, and the distant sound of thunder. Despite frequent police raids, the satta goes on and the transactions in a day can cross several lakhs of rupees or dwindle to a few thousands. The skies of Bikaner are not cloudy all day but even the little fluff of nimbus floating by is enough to inspire those who speculate about the heavens.

The bookmakers here do not need any personal computers or even simple calculators. All the betting is conducted by an innocuous flick of the fingers and of course dollops of faith. Says Mohan Srimali, 68, who grew up in the gali: "This is nothing less than your Dalla (Dalal) Street

of Bombay. Crores change hands here without even a paper being exchanged.'

Placing money on the vagaries of the monsoon is not an unusual occurrence in India, but what sets Bikaner apart is that rain is extremely scarce here. This year too, when the rest of Rajasthan was deluged by torrents flooding city after city, Bikaner had only one-fourth of its normal rainfall-21 mm since June-till last fortnight.

Given such a dismal scenario, the speculators in Bikaner have devised ingenious ways to place bets. There is the drizzle bet. A plateful of sand is placed on the roof of a house in the Bada Bazaar where a panch-who is now called the referee following the football mania— is in charge. If 21 drops of water fall on the sand-filled plate it is deemed to have rained. Else, those who've placed their money on rain, lose.

The catch however is that the droplets should fall in one continuous drizzle. After that the sand is changed and the vigil for the heavens to open again and to fill the plate with droplets and the coffers of the lucky punters with money, is on once more.

The other kind of gamble is the shower bet: in this an old vegetable-oil can holds the fortunes of those who place bets. According to the rules there should be at least six ounces of water in the can after a single spell of rain. If the shower stops before delivering the six ounces, well, it's bad luck for those who bet on rain. After the spoils are divided, the can is emptied and the participants await the next spell.

The rarest bet, however, hinges on

whether the rainfall will be so heavy that the water flows down a particular drain. A fixed point on the drain is decided earlier, and if the water flows past this, the money of the sceptics goes down the drain.

With enormous amounts of money at stake the betting community of Bada Bazaar has made sure that the system is not used by unscrupulous operators. No cartels can be formed. Naresh Daga, an old hand at the betting market explains with his time-tested puns: "Our methods are absolutely watertight. Those trying hanky-panky are washed down the drain in no time."

Puns apart, there are those who insist that the whole affair of betting is no guesswork, but a science. There are 'cloud readers' who claim to decipher the intricate language of winds and cloud movements. Craning their necks skywards through the day, they can even tell the difference between a white cloud which has rained a few kilometres away and a grey one which may bring showers. Srimali explains that only when the purba (easterly monsoon wind) clashes with the nagauran (westerly wind wafting from Nagaur) are the chances of rain bright.

It rains only when the sky is clear early in the morning creating the desired level of humidity. A triangular saffron flag serves the purpose of a weathercock for the sky-

watchers of Bikaner.

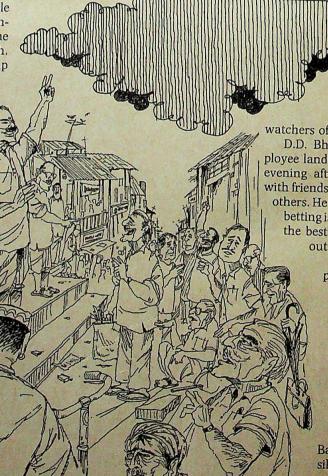
D.D. Bhattar, a railway employee lands up at the gali every evening after office to have tea with friends and check notes with others. He says that though rain betting is like an addiction, it is the best entertainment without investment.

The spin-offs of a bettingprosperous market are also visible in the lane. Dozens of tea stalls and snack shops do roar-

ing business in the Gali Chai Bati because the winners invariably treat others with hot kachauris and pakoras.

Clearly, in Gali Chai Bati, every cloud has a silver lining.

-PANKAJ PACHAURI in Bikaner

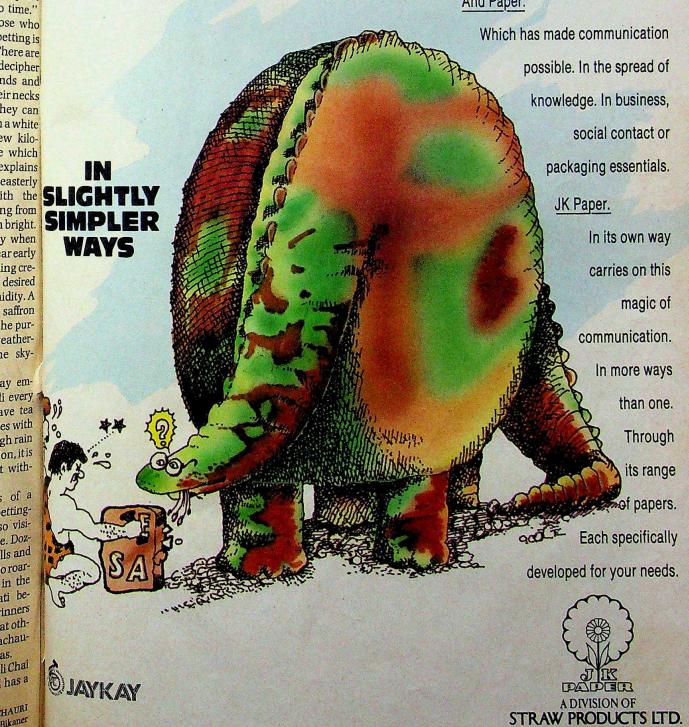


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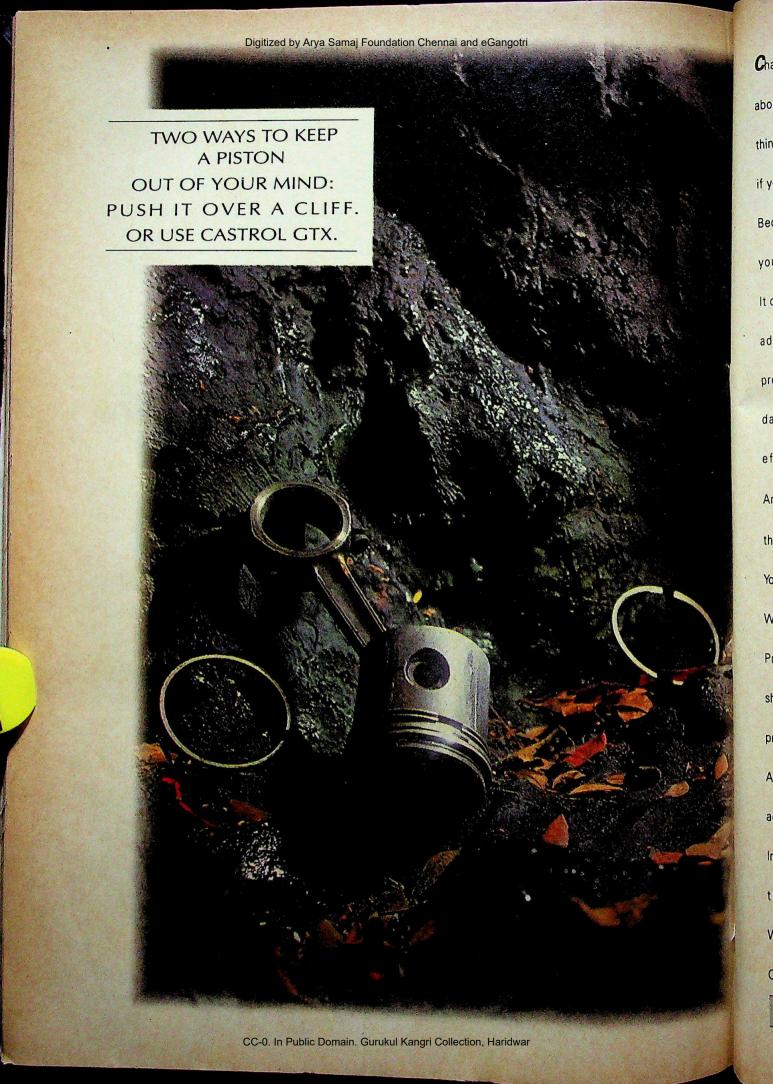
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Bikaner



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# **Restoring Credibility**



THE litmus test for the Constitution (67th Amendment) moved in Parliament in May, for the establishment of the National Judicial Com-

ission is whether it will restore a ittered judiciary to what the foundgfathers intended it to be. Jawahar-Nehru told the Constituent Assemy on May 24, 1949, that judges fould be the kind of "people who can and up against the executive govern-

ent and whoever may ome in their way".

The main constitu-. ional check on executive ower in regard to apointments to the Sureme Court and high ourts is "consultation" ith the chief justice of idia. This is mandatory. is open to the President read Central Governent) additionally to conalt those Supreme Court and high court judges "as e may deem necessary' hen he appoints Sureme Court judges. But, hile appointing high ourt judges he is bound oconsult the governor of he state, that is the chief minister, and the chiefjusfice of that high court beides, of course, the chief istice of India. Two for-Der chief justices of India, .V. Chandrachud and N. Bhagwati, have acnowledged that these hecks have ceased to

%rk. Both suggested an independent ollegium to recommend names for pointments to the superior courts.

The 67th Amendment Bill prooses the establishment of just such a ody. Called the National Judicial ommission, it will make recommendions to the President on the apbintment of a judge of the Supreme ourt other than the chief justice of dla, a judge of a high court and on the ansfer of a high court judge.

Its composition will vary with its actions. For making recommendaons for appointments to the Supreme ourt bench and for transfer of a high

court judge, it will consist of the chief justice of India plus two of the seniormost judges of the Supreme Court. But for recommending names for the high court benches, it will consist of the chief justice of India, his seniormost colleague, the chief minister of the concerned state, the chief justice of the high court and his seniormost colleague.

To draw up a balance sheet, there are two tangible gains. First, the President sheds the power to transfer high court judges except "on the recomthe Supreme Court as well as a high court bench for reasons to be recorded in writing. No limit is provided as to the number of times the Government can reject a recommendation for a vacancy or as to time.

Secondly, all considered pleas for such a body, by judges or advocates, urged strongly that the bar must be represented on it. The bill slams the doors of the National Judicial Commission in the face of the bar. Thirdly, it excludes the chief justice of India completely from its purview. It could have,

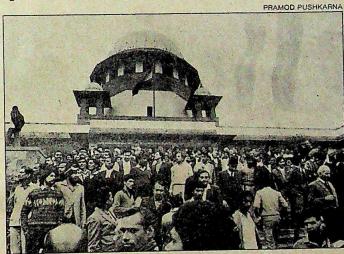
at the least, given constitutional recognition to the principle for seniority. It does not.

Lastly, the bill empowers the President to make rules of procedure for the National Judicial Commission "in consultation with the chief justice of India" and "subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament" This is unsatisfactory because the procedure of such a body is of vital importance. Who, for instance, will initiate its deliberative process, the chief justice of India or the Government? Till 1971, it was the former alone who suggested names; never the Government. This was changed with unfortunate results.

Aword of caution. The bill does not touch on an aspect which is worrying people in the wake of the S.K. Desai case. How do

we deal with a judge against whom grave charges of misbehaviour are levelled by the bar but without evidence enough to warrant initiation of the cumbrous impeachment proceedings?

The bill will certainly arrest the steady deterioration in the morale of the judiciary and help set things on the right course. But we have a long way to go to fulfil the founding fathers' expectations. And we can never afford to forget the jurist Ehrlich's dictum which Cardozo loved to quote: "There is no guarantee of justice except the personality of the judge."



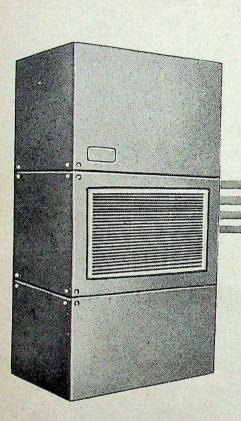
he setting up of a body to regulate the appointments and transfers of judges of the superior courts will help rectify matters.

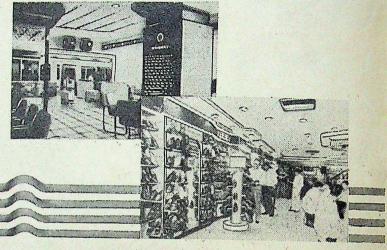
> mendation of the National Judicial Commission". It is open to him to reject the recommendation for reasons to be recorded in writing. High court judges will thus acquire judicial protection.

Secondly, the bill explicitly lays down that the President may not appoint a judge of the Supreme Court or a high court "unless he is recommended by the National Judicial Commission for such appointment"

This brings us to the flaws. First, the Government will have the power to stall on the commission's recommendations. The bill empowers it to reject a recommendation for appointment to

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# V.S. NAIPAUL A Million Mutinies Noverges a

V.S. Naipaul is rated among the world's grea's grow living writers. His third travel book on India, ir many decades, is soon to be released in the UK Shac purports to abandon his once acerbic tone for a dee and more generous understanding of his ancesterroris land. INDIA TODAY presents exclusive extracts, r, grud

liberation of spirit that has come to India could not come as release alone. In India, with its layer below layer of distress and cruelty, it had to come as disturbance.

N 27 years I had succeeded in making a kind of a return journey, sheddgain. E my Indian nerves, abolishing the darkness that separated me from in the

What I hadn't understood in 1962, or had taken too much for granted, uch an the extent to which the country had been remade; and the extent to whyin a vi India had restored to itself, after its own equivalent of the Dark Ages—afamily the Muslim invasions and the detailed, repeated vandalising of the Norsin. All the shifting empires, the wars, the 18th-century anarchy. The twentieincipal century restoration of India to itself had taken time; it could even seeft by the like a kind of luck. It had taken much to create a Bengali reformer btebloc Ram Mohun Roy (born in 1772); it had taken much more to create Gandranwa (born in 1869). The British peace after the 1857 Mutiny can be seen a kind of luck. It was a time of intellectual recruitment. India was set the way of a new kind of intellectual life; it was given new ideas about its history and civilization. The freedom movement reflected all of t and turned out to be the truest kind of liberation.

In the 130 years or so since the Mutiny—the last 90 years of the British bretender and the first 40 years of independence begin increasingly to appear as partman the same historical period—the idea of freedom has gone everywhere in Inders the Independence was worked for by people more or less at the top; the freedome sat or brought has worked its way down. People everywhere have ideas now of wrick ce they are and what they owe themselves. The process quickened with en bear economic development that came after independence; what was hidden of mo 1962, or not easy to see, what perhaps was only in a state of becoming, here o become clearer. The liberation of spirit that has come to India could not cothing in as release alone. In India, with its layer below layer of distress and cruelty in hi had to come as disturbance. It had to come as rage and revolt. India was not be ple be country of a million little mutinies.

A million mutinies, supported by twenty kinds of group excess, sectaring excess, religious excess, regional excess: the beginnings of self-awareness in De would seem, the beginnings of an intellectual life, already negated by anarchy and disorder. But there was in India now what didn't exist 200 years of pec before: a central will, a central intellect, a national idea. The Indian Union greater than the sum of its parts; and many of these movements of excellengthened the Indian etc. strengthened the Indian state, defining it as the source of law and civility as reasonableness. The Indian Union gave people a second chance, calling the child back from the excesses with sold in the second chance, calling the coman back from the excesses with which, in another century, or in other control of had Tying circumstances (as neighbouring countries showed), they might have had be child e child

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edestructive chauvinism of the Shiv Sena, the tyranny of many kinds of us fundamentalism (people always ready in India to let religion carry rden of their pain), the film-star corruption and racial politics of the the pious Marxist idleness and nullity of Bengal.

cess was now felt to be excess in India. What the mutinies were also OVeress and humanism of the values to which all I. I. appeal. And—strange irony—the mutinies were not to be wished They were part of the beginning of a new way for many millions, part of d's grea's growth, part of its restoration.

the UK Shadow of the Guru foradee

s ancesterrorists lived now only for murder, the idea of the enemy and the xtracts,r. grudge and complaint, like a complete expression of their faith. Violent is could be predicted for most of them: the police were not idle or illed. But while they were free they lived hectically, going out to kill again y, sheddgain. Every day there were seven or eight killings, most of them mere e from in the official report printed two days later. Only exceptional events

reported in detail.

seen a

anted, such an event was the killing by a gang, in half an hour, of six members of a t to why in a village about 10 miles away from Mehta Chowk. The two older sons .ges—a family had been killed; the father and the mother; the grandmother, and the Notsin. All the people killed were devout, amritdhari Sikhs. The eldest son, twentigincipal target of the gang, had been an associate of Bhindranwale. But a even seeft by the gang, in the room where four of the killings had taken place ormer bte bloodstained when it was found—said that the killers belonged to the ate Gandranwale Tiger Force.'...

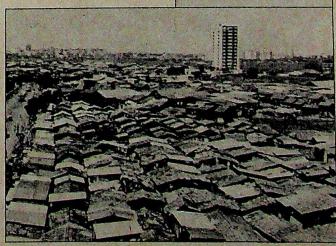
vas set THEN we arrived, in mid-afternoon, the people at work on the edge of leas abo the village were cautious. We-strangers arriving in an ordinaryall of Vlooking hired car—could have been anything, police or terrorists: ifferent kinds of trouble. They frowned a little harder at their tasks, British bretended almost not to see us. It was strange to find that there was no raspareman or official in the village, and that less than 48 hours after the rein Inders the village had been left to itself again...

freedone sat on string beds in the open, bright room at the left of the entrance. ow of wrick ceiling, which was also the floor of the upper room, rested on with ten beams laid on steel joists. The concrete pillars were chamfered, with hidden of moulded or carved decoration, and painted in many colours—an ming, here of the pillars of Hindu temples before the Muslim invasions.

not couthing in this courtyard spoke of the owner's cruelty it in his property.

was no tople began to come to us. They sat on the beds, their backs to the light, or leaned sectarist the painted pillars. The Punjabi costume ted by a book and elsewhere, was here still only 200 year leople's clothes, the smeared and dirty Jnion w of people whose life was bound up with their of exce A sturdy woman in her thirties, in a greyivility at lowered suit, grimy at the ankles, came
lling the child on her hip and sat on the string bed. in othe man's eyes were swollen, almost closed, ave had Tying. echild who now sat on her lap and held on

was in India now what didn't exist 200 years before: a central will, a central intellect, a national idea. The Indian Union was greater than the sum of its parts; and many of these movements of excess strengthened the Indian state, defining it as the source of law and civility and reasonableness.



NAMAS BHOJANI

The people at work on the edge of the village were cautious. Westrangers arriving in an ordinarylooking car could have been anything, police or terrorists: two different kinds of trouble. They frowned a little harder at their tasks, and pretended almost not to see us.

to her was the seven-year-old son of the eldest brother. The boy had betilled in the room when his father was killed; he had been saved from the burser and the AK-47 only because another brother had hidden with him under a ded, at The boy was still dazed, still able from time to time to take an intenta's fa in the strangers; occasionally, while people talked, tears appeared in courty eves. He had been put into a clean, pale-brown suit, and his hair had bevard to to grab done up in a top knot.

The uncle who had saved him was a handsome, slender man of twento the three. He had dressed with some care for this occasion, all the visithe pol coming: a blue turban, a stylish black-and-grey check shirt. He beganed Buta tell of the events; while he did so a girl cousin came and unaffectedly resclose to her head on his shoulder. the gr

here V THE farming day went on. The buffaloes came home, through the geers tol way. The heavy chains they dragged rang dully on the bricked valutaand their hooves made a hollow, drumming sound. And village coulbus per sies were not forgotten: water was brought out for the visitors, and then Buta. Bu

Joga was the name of the man in the black-and-grey check shirt. Whatidn't co said was translated for me then by the journalists with me, and amplified inqui following day by Avinash Singh, a correspondent of The Hindustan Timrye Pol

The family had had dinner, Joga said, and a number of them were in juta ne room on the living-quarters side of the courtyard. (The opposite side bened d for the cattle or buffaloes). Some of them were 'sipping tea.' A little avery frinine there was a commotion in the courtyard, and someone called out frent out there: 'The one who has come from Jodhpur, and poses as a religious man was a should come out.'...

Buta, the elder brother, went to the door off the room. The men outside banjon called for the man who had come 'from Jodhpur.' Jodhpur had a meanitsin fro Buta, with 200 or 300 others, had been detained in the fort at Jodhr as a suspected terrorist for more than four years, from June 1984 WOO September 1988—just eight months before. But a had been detained becat ment, he had been in the Golden Temple at the time of the army action, and he w nation known as a religious follower of Bhindranwale's. Buta admitted being gener follower; but he said he wasn't a terrorist. He was in the Golden Temple the Singh day, he said, because he had taken an offering of milk for the anniversity wha of the martyrdom of the fifth Guru, executed on the orders of the Empere more Jehangir in 1606. seeme

This was the man, only thirty-two, but already with many years suffering, his life already corrupted, who went and stood at the door a tamme looked out at the many muffled men in the courtyard.

The leader said, 'Who is Buta Singh?'

'I am Buta Singh.'

'Come with us. We want you. We have com take you.' And the man who spoke said to one of Singhs, 'Tie his hands.'

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olice bu Some of the men made as if to seize him by oth stat arms. Buta said, 'I won't, I won't.' There wa scuffle, and two of the Singhs fired. A bullet hit Bullet had to just below his ribs on the right side, and he was the backwards into the room. Buta's mother thre ought herself on her son, saying to the men, 'please don' gurd kill.' Buta's brother Jarnail and Buta's Win emo Balwinder also fell on Buta. The Singhs pull ling for away Balwinder by her hair from her husband, at ve drow they fired again with their AK-47s. Buta had ch, we



had bekilled yet; but he was killed now, with his ne burst and his brother. Buta's grandmother was nder a ded, and was to die in a few days.

in interita's father ran out from his room at the front red in courtyard, the street side. He ran across the had beyard to where the men with the guns were. He to grab one of the guns. He was killed with a

of twento the head...

ne visithe police said that the gang in question beganed Buta to join them. Buta, as a man who had edly resclose to Bhindranwale until 1984, would have

the group some 'credibility.'

here was another story as well that the the ggers told. Shortly after his release from Jodh-

cked vauta—who had taken a B.A. degree while in detention—had applied for a ge coulbus permit. This was part of the government's plan to rehabilitate people d then Buta. Buta went one day to the town of Jalandhar to see about his permit. t. Whalidn't come home at the time he should have done. People in the village uplified inquiries, and they found that Buta had been arrested by the Central

tan Timrve Police Force in Jalandhar. He was held for nine days.

vere in Juta never told anyone what he had been arrested for, or what had e side bened during the nine days of his detention. All they knew was that Buta little a very frightened when he came back, and never wanted to be alone when d out frent out of the village—to the tube well or the local market. (Some said that sman—was afraid of being caught by the police again. But this didn't seem al. Buta could have been picked up by the police whether he was with a utside banion or not. A companion, on the other hand, might have deterred an

meanilisin from the gangs.)...

e 1984 WO or three generations—not of work, but also of political encourageed becat ment, political security, development in agriculture, the growth of a nd he w national economy—had led Buta's family to where it had got. Two or ed being generations had led to the beginning of an intellectual inclination in emple the Singh. Awakening to knowledge, he would have seen with a special nivers by what he had come from. Ideas of injustice and wrongness would have Empe more easily to him than ideas of the steady movement of the rations; and the fundamentalism of someone like Bhindranwale would y years seemed to answer every emotional need, would have appeared like a door a ramme: ennobling complaint and the idea of persecution, offering by as an idea of glory betrayed, and offering for the present the themes of the enemy and redemption. That idea had trapped him and pt him away.

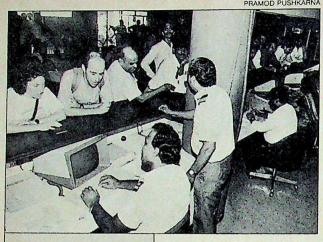
he police said he had been killed because he had refused to join the The note left by the Singhs said he had been responsible for the deaths, nim by the bullets, of two important terrorists. There might have been truth ere was had statements. It was part of the wretchedness of the situation, where et hit But had to be blooded into the cause, and, once blooded, couldn't turn away. nd he was a very religious man. He her thre bought religious primers for his two young sons; he went twice a day ease doll gurdwara to pray. Such devoutness! In the beginning it might have ta's win emotional and intellectual need; later, perhaps, it had become just

hs pulle ving for protection...

band, and edrove back to Amritsar through by-ways and village-ways, looking at ta had ch, well cultivated land. It was still afternoon and bright, still safe. After time we felt we had lost our way. We were on a dirt road between



The fundamentalism of someone like Bhindranwale would have seemed to answer every emotional need, would have appeared like a programme: ennobling complaint and the idea of persecution, offering history as an idea of glory betrayed, and offering for the present the twin themes of the enemy and redemption.



travel remained a necessary badge and privilege for important people...and for weeks a fair portion of the country's most eminent men and women was, at any given moment, becalmed in the country's airports, as if by an act of enchantment.

irrigated fields. We saw two men on a bicycle in the man doing the pedalling, one man on the carnisinth The man on the carrier was sitting elegany seaso sideways, feet together, but not dangling or haght to ing down. His shoes were locked together and to the ai were lifted, as though above the dust. When delaye stopped to ask the way, he slid off, with a practiency movement, and offered to come with us, to set uselectro the road to Amritsar.

He was as handsome as his posture on ment. I bicvcle had suggested. He was a Sikh, withreens, trimmed beard. The trimmed beard had a meanised a fi it meant he had not taken amrit. He had heall all t about Buta Singh's death, and the other murderasn't t

and he thought it dreadful. He himself didn't belong to any of the purely Swasn't political groups. He was in business in a small way and he considered hims have s successful. He enjoyed his success. He had built a house, he said, with toilew that and flush system and everything. He had spent four lakhs on this howffoodb £16,000. But he was thinking now that he might have to give up his host even l and leave the area. He hadn't taken amrit, and he didn't intend to. He did some think he would be able to live by the strict amritdhari rules, and he didn't wiwith an to get into trouble with the boys, as other people had done.

#### **Breaking Out**

AS soon as I got to the airport at Santa Cruz, the airport in Bombay for interpoard be Indian flights, I felt like a refugee. There was a crowd at the entrance; apple fro criminally inclined young men of the neighbourhood were trying to extre for th money from passengers for moving luggage a few feet from taxis to tizine was

Policemen were guarding the doorway against the young men, but the end of seemed not to be offering protection to people outside, even when they we night almost at the door, and the young men, understanding this, ran two or thragari c at a time to people just arriving, fell shouting on suitcases and bags, and tri was no to create an unbalancing atmosphere of frenzy. They were small and thivery litt these young criminals of the neighbourhood, and they were in tight minuation chocolate-coloured trousers of some synthetic fabric that showed up the lovi Riv frailty in hip and thigh. Their faces were small and bony, and their ned tovert looked as though they might easily snap. Their wretchedness of physiquely. Bu didn't make them less threatening: they called up the very thin, fawnin and the sinister figures of some of the Cruikshank illustrations for Dickens. dasold

ROWD and noise and threat and urgency outside, taxis coming an going in the mid-afternoon sun. Crowd inside as well, and noise, but was a different kind of noise: it was more stable: it was the noise of peop going nowhere. There was only one internal airline in India; it was a sta airline, and it was a mess. It was said by various spokesmen that the flights this airline had to be late because many of them originated in Delhi, and then of ma was fog in Delhi on many mornings. There were other problems. The airling had now the body and the state of t had never had enough aircraft, and in the last few weeks a number of aircraft wh had been withdrawn for one reason or another. Services were now in chaof sed bri But air travel remained a necessary badge and privilege for important people ing, the scientists and administrators scientists and administrators and business executives; and for weeks a fairly the portion of the country's most eminent men and women was, at any given acture moment, becalmed in the country's airports, as if by an act of enchantment

when-

icycle, on the newspapers regularly told of depleted conferences on important he carrisin this town and that town. Yet the demand for seats, especially at this elegany season, was greater than ever, and I had been able to get a ticket for g or haight to Goa only through the intercession of an influential friend.

er and the airport hall the information screens flashed news of ever more When delayed or abandoned. It was as though there had been some national a practiency or disaster. The many grey-and-white screens gave constant, to set uselectronic jumps, delivering the bad news above the heads of the crowd vere going nowhere but were not still, were in constant, very slow

re on ment. My own flight to Goa had been delayed for five hours already. Now h, withreens, whenever (as in a lottery) the number of the Goa flight came up, meanised a further delay of four hours. But some people had been waiting in

had heall all that day...

r murdevasn't to give up hope, the man from Delhi said. He knew for sure that the urely Stwasn't abandoned. He had a cousin in the catering business-or he ed himsthave said that his in-laws did some of the catering for the airline—and vith toilew that his cousin or his in-laws had distinctly received orders for a plane his howfoodboxes for the Goaflight that day. This meant, he said, that the flight his host even leave before midnight. This was the way of privilege in India: to . He did someone who knew someone who had a connection, even a tangential idn't wwith an important organization...

UT the man from Delhi was right. There was a plane to Goa; and when—time having ceased to matter—we swarmed and bumped abroad, there were the food-boxes of the Delhi man's story, the grey or interpoard boxes (with white-bread sandwiches and a pastry of some kind and ance; apple from the North) that his friends or relations had prepared for the g to ext<mark>t</mark>e for the day's Goa flight. The plane felt over-used. The airline in-flight xis to tzinewas dog-eared. A piece of the overhead trim had shaken loose; every he stewardess tapped it back in, it quivered out again. But there was Goa , but the end of the very short flight. And it was interesting, getting out into the they we night air, at last, to see the name of the place spelt out in the Hindi o or thragari characters: Go-wa.

, and tri was now well past midnight. We got into a cramped tourist bus. There and thivery little space between the seats, and the glass was tinted: it was like a ght minuation of the constraints of Santa Cruz. After some time we came to the up the lovi River. And there, literally, was a break in the journey. There was no neir ned eover the Mandovi River. There had been a bridge, a new one, until quite physiquily. But after standing for 10 years or so, the bridge had fallen down one fawnin and the Mandovi was now crossed by ferries, rough contraptions that das old as the century, but had been built only after the bridge had fallen

Luggage was manhandled down from the Ithe bus on to Indian earth and then into the and then, at the other bank, out of the ferry on to the roof of a second bus: technology flights of way (furtively, in the Indian night) to the and then of many feeble hands doing simple small

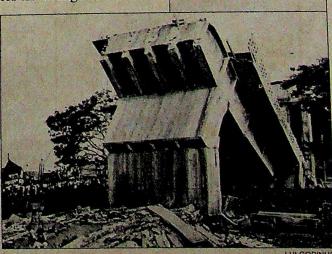
of aircraind when, two days or so later, I saw the in chaos sed bridge in daylight, only the mighty piers nt people ng, the linking pieces not there, it seemed to eks a fall p the experience of that long day and night, ny given acture in reality.

he airlin

<sup>Publis</sup>hed by William Heinemann Limited; Price £16.95)



Luggage was manhandled down from the roof of the bus on to Indian earth and then into the ferry, and then, at the other bank, out of the ferry and up on to the roof of a second bus: technology giving way (furtively, in the Indian night) to the India of many feeble hands doing simple small tasks.



# **Promises Unkept**



IOURNALISTS as a tribe are supposed to be hard-headed realists, if not cynics, chary of accepting politicians at their word. Yet the eupho-

ria induced by the defeat of Rajiv Gandhi's Congress (I) and the extravagant promises of the Janata Dal was so pervasive among large sections of the journalistic fraternity that they gave the National Front Government their willing suspension of

The press had believed because it wanted to believe that the National Front Government would give genuine autonomy to the electronic media. And for more than six months, the press helped the Information and Broadcasting Minister, P. Upendra, perpetrate the biggest confidence trick any government in India had been able to pull off.

Umpteen seminars were held. many of them organised and financed by the Government. Journalists' organisations, including the august Editors' Guild pored over clauses and sub-clauses of that magic document, the Prasar Bharati Bill, to come up with a host of amendments. And in the background was Upendra egging journalists on. All the suggestions and amendments, he said somewhat like a magician pulling a rabbit out hat, would be into computers and monitored by a special cell in his ministry.

This mountain of labour produced mouse: a Prasar Bharati Bill amended only to make it worse than it was. Hobbled as the proposed governing and supervisory bodies were, the Government now gave itself the right to supersede the board of governors and even impose President's Rule over the corporation during an emergency.

Finally, the penny has dropped. There was an unmistakable note of anguish in Kalpana Sharma's cry in The Times of India. "The hope that this government would fulfil its election promise of giving the country the gift of a truly autonomous corporation to govern the electronic media has died,' she wrote.

Yet, journalists have only themselves to blame for wearing blinkers. After a brief period of glasnost occasioned in large part by the confusion prevailing in the ranks of the Janata Dal as it organised itself as a governing party, Doordarshan reverted to a familiar pattern. Never a man to miss a populist trick, Vishwanath Pratap Singh said more than once: Send me a

P. Upendra: empty rhetoric



he Government, instead of granting autonomy, is trying to serve up propaganda in a professional package.

postcard if I appear too often on television. After a time, such assertions were greeted by the people with ennui.

There are fewer visuals of the prime minister than in his predecessor's time, but Vishwanath Pratap Singh remains a pervasive presence in Doordarshan's main news bulletins. And his ministers are working overtime to open seminars and exhibitions on the small screen. Feature programmes on the National Front Government's record are suitably tilted in its favour. The elation with which the All India Radio news-reader read out the flash that V.P. Singh had agreed not to press his resignation had to be heard to be believed.

Before we again fall into the trap of

wishful thinking, let us be clear about Wo the character and place of the electronic media in the Indian scheme of **0Za** things. The Indian political climate is inimical to a free, or even a truly day autonomous, radio and television. For one thing, no government, whatever eate its professions, wants to give up control over a powerful instrument of mp propaganda.

A nominally autonomous cor-118 C poration will not change the char acter of the electronic media because the Government of the day will continue to mould it in line Lime with its political requirements. Professionalism can have little place in stria re news or political discussions when irring mu ceremonial occasions must take pride of place, when government<sup>787-1828</sup>) propaganda must be disseminated. Those when particular ministers must be peccably accommodated. And there are pressed t enough zealous members of Parlia- more wa ment recording their individual exposure on television with what 60: TF could be a tape measure.

The problem thus, for the Gov- F THE ernment as it was for its predeces- England sor, is how to manage the contra- w men diction—to serve up propaganda in wing go a professional package. Upendra ublet, br has failed in this task because the re repla men who run radio and television st and tr in India lead a schizophrenic exis- Into 192 tence at the best of times. With the le evenir mixed signals they have been re-tince of V ceiving and after the dose of rheto- red to w ric so liberally dispensed by this puble bre government, they cannot be ex- cket. A to pected to show initiative or imagination.

The National Front Government thus must perforce emulate the Rajiv Gandhi regime in buying peace with a majority of viewers and listeners by throwing in soporific soap operas and quiz programmes. The reported increase in the number of feature films to be telecast is an interesting instance. The news bulletins and political "discussions" trundle on, as is their wont.

It is ironic that the Soviet leader. Mikhail Gorbachev, should be giving India a lesson in democracy. He has freed Soviet radio and television from Communist Party control while the National Front Government hugs the electronic media as its exclusive preserve.

Wolfs

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the elec. Wolfgang Amadeus cheme of ozart were alive a truly day, would he whateverreate another up conment omphony in nous cordis celebration?

the day! t in line lime was when the opera halls of ents. Proplace in stria reverberated to the soulns when irring music of the legendary genius ust take Wolfgang Amadeus ernment<sup>787-1828</sup>).

minated Those were the days must be peccably attired men and women ere are pressed their tastes for the good life of Parlia- more ways than one.

#### th what 60: THE YEAR the Gov- F THE TAIL COAT.

redeces- England, in the 19th Century-and contra- w men's fashions changed! The ganda in wing gowns disappeared ... and the Upendra ublet, breeches and hose

ause the ere replaced by coat, elevision st and trousers.

nic exis- Into 1920 and With the te evening, the been re- nince of Wales of rheto-pred to wear the first by this tuble breasted dinner be ex-cket. A trend followed!



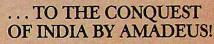
The Evolution of Neckties.

792. A man's 'neckcloth' went twice and the neck and ended in a bow. A and cloth was also worn, making a pso thick that its size equalled that

eckwear has come a long way e. Pattern and colour complement suit and shirt. A hint of a match-

8: A navy blue jacket takes a tie of ow or burgundy background with a tch of blue.

lie choices: Foulards, Stripes, Dots, ds, Clubs, Paisleys.



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INVASION ...



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Nearly a century later, today we see the best of sartorial elegance-Italian cuts and the Indian classics!

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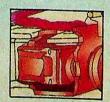
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Super!

Super!

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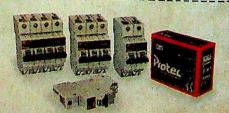
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Lisa Aziz: making news

 She is the glamour girl of British television. As presenter on the breakfast tele-

 For versatile actor Kamalahasan, once is not enough. Or twice for that matter. Even as the box-offices are still ringing with the success of his double role Apurva Sahodarargal, (Appu Raja in Hindi) Kamalahasan is back again playing four seprate roles in a Tamil film called Michael, Madana Kamarajan scheduled for release in

early August. In the racy comedy. Madan is a millionaire and the other three try to replace him by taking advantage of their simi-

Kamalahasan: four roles



vision programme, TV-AM, her face is familiar to millions of viewers. But the icing on the cake came when Lisa Aziz, 28. was crowned 'Asian of the Year' by the publishers of Who's Who of Asians in Britain. Other perks have come her way too. Coca-Cola have decided to recruit her to do their in-house promotional videos. But Aziz is hooked on television. Says she: "In India I was sought out by a perfume company who wanted me to be the perfume girl for the whole of the subcontinent. It was difficult to turn down but I decided it was too far removed from being a news-reader."

lar looks. Says Kamalahasan on his latest effort: "I am just trying to play a spoof on my own earlier roles. It's all in fun." What's fun for him is usually hard work for most other actors.

 It was vintage Vijay Mallya. The carcrazy business tycoon has notched up another victory, this time at last fortnight's International Vintage Car Race in Annaheim, California. With his brother-

Nachappa: runaway win



in-law as team-mate. Mallya drove his 1913 Rolls Royce to first place in the international category and the team was declared winner number 5 among 105 entrants. Said a jubilant Mallya at the end of the gruelling 10-day race: "We kept the car going and finished every single day." The 1913 Rolls is the first silver ghost to win the race.

 Her glamorous looks have earned her the sobriquet of 'India's Flo-Jo'. But sprinter Ashwini Nachappa has always existed in the shadow of track queen P.T. Usha. Last fortnight, she finally broke free when she achieved the biggest upset in Indian athletic historybeating Usha in the 200 metre race at the All India Athletic Meet in New Delhi. For Usha, this was her first defeat by an Indian since she began

PRADEEP MANDHANI



Mallya: vintage victory

her athletics career. Said a elated Nachappa: "I hai been running well this se son. This is just the begin ning; more is coming.

NAMAS EHOL

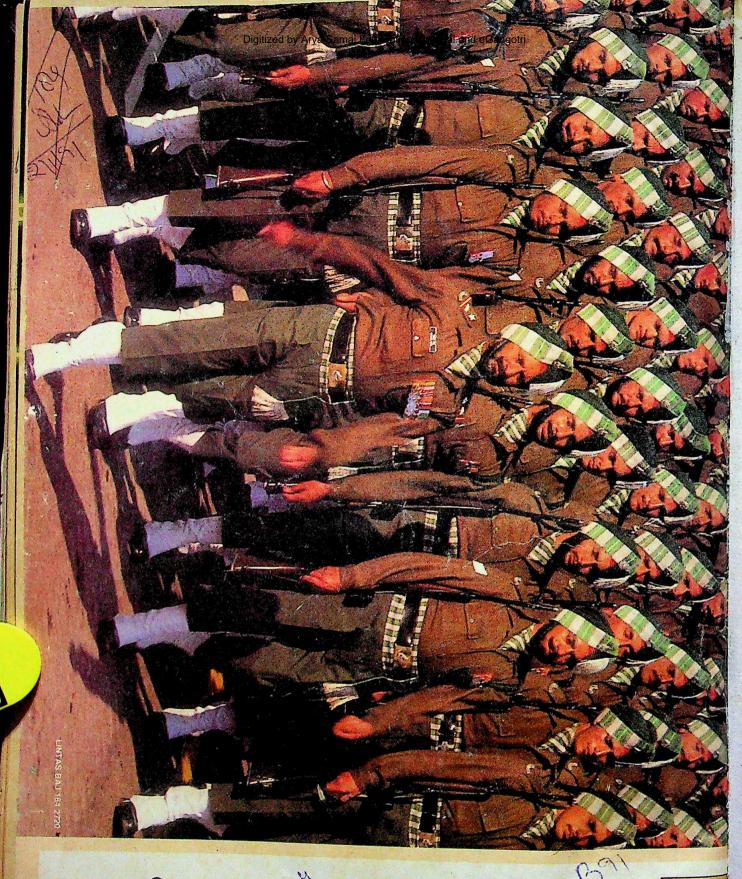


Jetley: flying out

 For Air India, it was eas ily its most dramatic un scheduled flight. After 40 tur

months bulent director managing Rajan Jetley, 40, quit last fortnight, announcing that he was joining Industries Britannia Singapore as president and chief executive officer incharge of its Asia-Pacific operations. Jetley's exit is well timed after he posted a healthy profit for the troubled airline for two successive years. Says the cor porate high-flyer: "I fet the time was right." But greater incentive may have been the \$1 million (Rs 1.80 crore) his new employer will be forking out for him annually.





called the army.

You just can't beat a bajaj Bajaj Auto Ltd., Akurdi, Pune 400 035,



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